THE *APOSTELESSE*'S SOCIAL NETWORK: THE MEANING OF MARY MAGDALENE IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY EAST ANGLIA

A Dissertation

by

MATTHEW EVAN DAVIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Britt Mize
Co-Chair of Committee,	Nancy Bradley Warren
Committee Members,	Robert Boenig
	J. Lawrence Mitchell
	Donnalee Dox
Head of Department,	Nancy Bradley Warren

December 2013

Major Subject: English

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how the construction of Saint Mary Magdalene as a symbol participated in a network of political, social, and religious practices in fifteenth-century England. That symbol both changed and was changed by shifting understandings of lay piety. In the second half of the fifteenth century the saint as a symbol became affiliated with the Yorkist side in the War of the Roses in ways that would have repercussions for her interpretation well into the early Tudor period.

Rooted in an analysis of relationships among medieval artifacts and the cultures of their production, my argument employs a synthesis of Actor-Network Theory and Peircian semiotics. This theoretical approach enables my analysis of a network of relationships among individuals, objects, and concepts through which Mary Magdalene travels as a semiotic "packet" of linguistic, visual, and conceptual signs. Only part of this packet's intended information is transferred while it travels through the network, however. This process of change, stemming from differing emphases regarding the saint, allows new ideas to be deliberately added to the packet over time. The author or authors' immediate needs regarding the saint are always reflected, but elements of previous interpretations of Mary Magdalene's symbolism remain.

I trace uses of the Middle English term *apostelesse* throughout the dissertation as a means to follow fifteenth-century ideas regarding Mary Magdalene as they evolve. I begin my analysis of the status of the saint is by considering the interactions of Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, and Nicholas

Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*. Next, I examine the transplantation of the word into a contemporary, politicized context in Osbern Bokenham's mid-century *Lyf of Marye Mawdelyn*. I then turn to the Digby *Mary Magdalene* play to discuss Mary Magdalene as an *apostelesse* due to her personal authority and evangelical mission to Marseilles. Finally, the dissertation concludes by noting how the specific changes analyzed in each chapter reflect the changing role of the saint over the course of the fifteenth century and by looking briefly ahead to her symbolism in two early modern works: the *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* and *An harborowe for faithful and trewe subiectes.*

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Kara, who probably has heard far more about Mary Magdalene than she ever wanted to hear in her life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much like the idea of Mary Magdalene in the fifteenth century, this dissertation is the product of the intersection of various networks of influence upon my thinking and scholarship. The first and perhaps most important of these networks is my family. I would like to thank my parents, Larry and Kathleen Davis, for instilling in me a sense of the importance of learning, even if I did not always take their lessons on the importance of homework to heart, and my wife Kara for being my sounding board throughout the dissertation writing process.

Intersecting that network is the network of colleagues and teachers I gained at Texas A&M University. I would like to thank the members of my committee for their time in reading this dissertation and their thoughtful commentary on the scholarship it contains. Foremost amongst them are my co-chairs, Britt Mize and Nancy Warren, who were unceasingly willing to listen to my ideas regarding Mary Magdalene and other aspects of the fifteenth century and to read draft after draft of both this and my other work. They forced me to truly think through what the implications were for what I am saying here, and for that I am enternally grateful. Also important were my fellow English Department medievalists in the Medieval Studies Working Group at Texas A&M – Christina Cedillo, Amber Dumai, Noah Peterson, and later Jon Quick – who introduced me to many new ideas and ways of thinking. Both to these and other friends at A&M who were not medievalists – Yonggi Kim, Reynaldo Valdez, and Galen Wilson – I owe a debt for helping to keep me sane and grounded.

There are those networks that helped this dissertation financially. These include the College of Liberal Arts; the Inititive for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture at Texas A&M; the Folger Institute; Rare Books School at the University of Virginia; and the Leland.T. and Jesse W. Jordan Center for International Awareness. All of these organizations contributed in part in the development of this dissertation either by supporting me during the process of writing it or during the process of doing the initial research. Furthermore, those friends and mentors I met through the courses I took at Rare Book School and the Folger – Katherine Chandler, Alyssa Beer, Michael North, Theresa Coletti, Maggie Ellen Ray, Ann Hubert, Gina Marie Di Salvo, Allison Adair Alberts, and Virginia Murphy – have continued the conversations begun in those courses and which have affected the development of this dissertation.

Last are those scholars both in and out of academia who have acted as my external support structure beyond the campus – James Donahue, Kara Andersen, Michelle Brown Boucher, Victoria Souza, Alison Walker, Rebecca Futo Kennedy, Brittany Davis, Christine Baker, and Andrew McNair. They have talked me down many times when I could have made a mountain out of a molehill, and provided much needed perspective.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: BEFORE THE APOSTELESSE

This dissertation seeks to achieve three aims. First, it analyzes the symbolism of Mary Magdalene as it changed throughout the fifteenth century rather than examing that symbolism as the isolated subject of a single text. Second, it acknowledges the textual, historical, and material contexts in which several works—Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, Osbern Bokenham's *Lyf of Mary Maudelyn*, and the anonymous Digby *Mary Magdalene*—were produced, examining the ways in which the interacting aspects of those contexts both influenced and were influenced by the saint's changing symbolism. My study demonstrates that the introduction of the phrase *apostelesse* into English with Nicholas Love's *Mirror* provided a term necessary to reflect the changes in Mary Magdalene as a symbol throughout the century. Those changes, interpreted through the lay understanding of her based on the *Legenda Aurea* and influenced by Love's interpretation of *apostelesse*, culminated with the development of Mary Magdalene as an apostolic figure in her own right.

I chose Mary Magdalene as the subject of this dissertation because the Mary Magdalene of the fifteenth century is already a composite figure ripe for resignification. As Susan Haskins explains,

> Mary Magdalen was, from the earliest centuries of Christianity, closely linked to and ultimately conflated with two other New Testament figures – a woman described by Luke as a 'sinner', and Mary of Bethany, who appears in Luke's gospel and in John's account of the Passion. To a lesser

> extent, she was also associated with the woman from Samara (John 4:6-42), and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11).[1]

Since each of these women has her own story, conflating Mary Magdalene with one or more of them automatically changes how an audience perceives her. For example, in the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great declared in his Homily XXXIII that Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the "sinner" referenced in Luke were all the same figure.[2] Gregory collapsed some of the ambiguity regarding Mary Magdalene's significations through this action, but by associating her with the sinner in Luke he also introduced the idea that she was a prostitute, changing her signification at the same time as he reduced it. That new signification would become perhaps the most recognized interpretation of the saint to the present day.

It was not the only one, however. While the conflated Mary Magdalene became one of the most common understandings of the saint, questions regarding her in relation to the other Marys of the Bible remained.[3] With her sister Martha, Mary Magdalene participated in one of a number of binary pairs meant to elucidate the active and contemplative lives; Mary Magdalene came, ultimately, to represent the lives of the cloistered as opposed to the lives of those priests active in church and cathedral. It is this figure that, in the twelfth century, is first referred to as *apostola apostolorum* and whose significations which throughout the fifteenth century I will explore.

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[1] Haskins, 16.
[2] Gregory I, *Homiliarum*. In Migne, comp. PL, vol. 76 col. 1239C.
[3] Constable, 6-7.

My approach is to show that signs in general, and Mary Magdalene as a sign specifically, are not static. Instead, they are dynamic and iterative, operating within a contextual framework of other significations that must be considered before the meaning of the sign at a particular moment can be understood. In that I acknowledge and engage with the material and social in exploring those contexts. My analysis builds upon the work of Gail McMurray Gibson, Theresa Coletti, Karen Winstead, and Claire Sponsler, especially as it concerns the relationship between the material object, the cult of saints, and examination of lay piety.[4]

In addition to being influenced by the work of those scholars mentioned above, whose work on the fifteenth century has been the constant companion of my thinking regarding Mary Magdalene, my attempts to contextualize literature through the material owes much to the influence of the careful methods of analytical bibliography and codicology. In that way, G. Thomas Tanselle and Albert Derolez have been instrumental to my consideration of the material object.[5] The connection between the ideas represented in the texts of this dissertation and the materiality of their presentation stems largely from the awareness of materiality both authors insist upon in their scholarship.

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[4] Specific texts by these authors can be found in the references section.

[5] Those interested in the approaches of these two scholars would be rewarded by reading Tansalle's *Bibliographical Analysis: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Derolez's *The Paleography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Additionally, Derolez's introductory course on Codicology at Rare Book School is well worth taking. His comments regarding the relationship between Gothic architecture and the presentation of text on the page in manuscripts written in Gothic Textura Quadrata helped me to make some important mental connections regarding the material presentation of ideas.

As such, these analytical methods serve to underpin some element of my thinking instead of being obviously visible. What is visible, however, is the influence of semiotic theory in the development of my concept of Mary Magdalene's constantly changing signification and evolution as an *apostelesse*. I begin by acknowledging the linguistic basis of the concept of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* through the application of Saussure's ideas regarding the differences between *sheep, mutton*, and *mouton* as they might apply to the Latin *apostola apostolorum* and its Middle English translation *apostles apostelesse.*[6] Ultimately, however, Saussure's dyadic conception of the communication of ideas and the way in which that conception is grounded in the linguistic actions of speech are not enough to explain every aspect of Mary Magdalene as a sign. Since I am interested in the material expressions of the saint-as-sign as well as the linguistic, I move from Saussure to Charles Sanders Peirce's ideas regarding semiotics and the sign. Peirce's structure, which is intended to help understand the process of cognition rather than the act of speech, allows for the material to be included in a way that attends to complexities of signification for which Saussure's model cannot account.[7]

However, because Peirce primarily deals with signs as an element of cognition for a single individual, he does not consider the ways in which the set of mental and physical tools are necessary to realize the sign function over time. Nor does he consider the ways in which the sign might be transferred or the implications of imperfect

[6] de Saussure, 160.
[7] Peirce, *Writings,* 56.

transferrence. To overcome these limitations, I modify Peirce's semiotic theory by considering it in synthesis with John Law's ideas regarding the network as expressed in Actor-Network Theory. When considered together, these two theorists provide a mechanism to understand how signs might be interepreted and spread throughout fifteenth century England.

My first chapter deals with what I call the semiotic packet—the multiple significations surrounding any sign as it moves through a network of individuals, ideas, and material objects. Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* is one such packet, serving as a touchstone regarding the varying significations of Mary Magdalene in three texts: Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*, which first introduced the word into English and functioned as an anti-Lollard tract; its source, the twelfth-century *Meditaciones Vitae Christi*; and the *Book of Margery Kempe*, which signals lay understanding of Mary Magdalene's signification. Additionally, Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* provides an example of more complex signification against which both the *Mirror* and the *Book* are compared. Finally, I examine manuscript decoration and architectural elements to show how the significations of Mary Magdalene cannot be considered solely textually. By examining the signification of Mary Magdalene in this manner, I emphasize the necessity of considering the full context of the saint in approaching these texts.

Careful consideration of the text in its complete social, political, and aesthetic contexts explains why Love introduces the word *apostelesse* into English in a text that is expressly opposed to the sort of lay preaching of which Margery Kempe was accused

and which Mary Magdalene could be argued to represent. His translation of the *Meditaciones,* intended for a lay audience instead of the religious audience of his source, resignifies the intent of the original ideas to meet the challenges of his particular moment. Considering Love's goals in producing the *Mirror*, however, interestingly Mary Magdalene as *apostola apostolorum* is not resignified in translation. Instead, careful examination of Love's reference to how contemplation should work—a reference that is both opposed and reinforced by Kempe's actual attempt to practice lay contemplation at the beginning of the fifteenth century—explains why a phrase that could easily be used to justify the activities of the Lollards actually enters English unchanged through an anti-Lollard text.

My second chapter deals with Mary Magdalene's significations in Osbern Bokenham's *Lyf of Mary Mawudelyn.* I compare Bokenham's presentation to that of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* as well as to contemporary versions of her *vita* in English. These comparisons demonstrate that Bokenham's intent is to develop Mary Magdalene's position as *the* exemplar, second only to Christ and co-equal with the Virgin Mary in what Susan Haskins refers to as the Second Eve formulation. He does this in part to accede to the wishes of his patroness, Isobel Bouchier, but the inclusion of his Magdalene *vita* in the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea* shows that Bokenham's signification of Mary Magdalene had a life outside of a single patroness.

By resignifying Mary Magdalene in this way, Bokenham is utilizing what I call conceptual scripture—those elements that are part of accepted practice and inform the beliefs of the fifteenth century but do not have their basis in scripture in the same way

we might expect today. That these episodes were accepted despite their extrapolation from scripture, or indeed in some cases their absence from scripture entirely, is also shown by use of elements from scuplted roof bosses which join together the arches of Norwich Cathedral. Looking at the Abbotsford *Legenda* in relation to a social network and alongside the remnants of stained glass and architectural verses at Holy Trinity, Long Melford, I suggest that Bokenham wrote his *vita* of Mary Magdalene for a specific set of political circumstances in the mid-1450's.

From there, I look at the hierarchy of decoration in the Abbotsford *Legenda* and the circumstances of its production to show the importance of Mary Magdalene in a particular text associated with Yorkist interests. Additionally, Cicely Neville's likely ownership of the book and her will show that echoes of the mid-century political moment surrounding Bokenham's composition of his Magdalene *vita* remained long after. I consider the possibility of a social network, attached to pilgrimage routes, which would allow for Bokenham's ideas about Mary Magdalene to gain wider currency.

The third chapter, on the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, presents the signification of the saint at perhaps her greatest power in the fifteenth century. Directly stated to be an *apostelesse* divorced from the limitations inherent in the phrase *apostles apostelesse*, she serves to signify both the act of pilgrimage and the ability of women to preach, turning the initial introduction of *apostelesse* into English by Love completely on its head. I describe the means by which the playwright is able to define Mary Magdalene's power and authority in a large-scale civic production by careful analysis of the play's structure,

noting its shifts between the historical and allegorical modes, and marking the points at which the playwright uses the performance to signify Mary Magdalene as an exemplar.

By first acknowledging the hybrid nature of the play, then splitting it into episodes—an idea first put forth by Mary Loubris Jones—I acknowledge that the play is at first concerned with Mary Magdalene as an allegorical everyman figure, transitioning between the real world of salvation history and the allegorical world represented by the figures of the Seven Deadly Sins, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Once the events of the allegorical play have been concluded, I then touch on the work of Theresa Coletti to note how that allegorical representation of the saint serves to reinforce her status as exemplar and preacher during the legendary portion of the play. I contend that the playwright presents the signification of the saint in a way that reduces the role of the institutional Church. Instead, Mary Magdalene emerges an alternate path of piety that is available to lay individuals and is only tangentally related to the structures of the Church.

I conclude with a brief discussion of what happened to Mary Magdalene's cult after the fifteenth century, using the prologue and final speech of the Lewis Wager's 1567 *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* and John Aylmer's 1559 *An harborowe for faithful and trewe subiectes.* These two texts show that the new focus on the Bible robs Mary Magdalene of many of the significations she gained through the reinterpretation of conceptual scripture over time while at the same time providing Elizabeth with many of the significations shared by both Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary. The result of this loss of significations is the reduction of Mary

Magdalene to only a figure of repentance, rather than a fully-fledged apostolic figure in her own right.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCING THE *APOSTELESSE*

In the early part of the fifteenth century, when Nicholas Love translated Johannis de Caulibus' pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditaciones Vitae Christi*, to produce a manual for lay devotion entitled the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus* Christ, he rendered the Latin *apostola apostolorum* as *apostles apostelesse*. This phrase would go on to be used not only in the monastic context in which Johannis was writing, but in the legendary context of Mary Magdalene's *vita*, and to contribute to ideas about Mary Magdalene and her significance that would come to have an unofficial lay interpretation operating in tandem with the more sanctioned interpretation of the saint in English devotion.

Although the concept of Mary Magdalene as apostle to the apostles dates back to the third century AD, the specific phrase *apostola apostolorum* as a linguistic sign is first mentioned in the early twelfth century. As Katherine Jansen notes, variations on the phrase appear in Abbot Hugh of Semur's *Commonitorium ad successors suos pro sanctimonialibus Marciniacensibus* (PL 159, col. 952), Peter Abelard's *Sermo 13* (PL 178, col. 485), and Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermo 75* (PL 183, col. 1148).[8] The context in which each of these authors uses the phrase is slightly different, however. Hugh is using it to reference Mary Magdalene as glorified sinner, who earns the title due to her

[8] Jansen, 61, 83 n. 23. Hugh also makes a distinction earlier between Mary Magdalene as evangelist and as apostle ("merito illa dicitur et apostolorum apostola, et evangelistarum evangelista" ["that one deservedly being called apostle of the apostles and evangelist of the evangelists"]) in column 582a and Abelard notes Mary Magdalene's apostolic status through apposition in col. 246b ("sicut igitur Mariam Magdalenam apostolorum dicimus apostolam" ["Consequently, just as we call Mary Magdalene, Apostle of the Apostles"]. All translations are mine except where noted otherwise.

connection to Christ. As we will see in chapter three, this becomes a significant strain of thinking about the Magdalene in Osbern Bokenham's *Lyf of Marye Mawdelyn*. Abelard is using her to draw a comparison between the Old and New Testaments, in a manner similar to both the allegorical debates between Ecclesia and Synagoga that occur throughout the Middle Ages and the comparison between Mary Magdalene and Martha as representatives of the active and contemplative lives. Interestingly, Bernard is actually using the title as a plural, including Mary Jacobi and Mary Cleophas as *apostola apostolorum*. In all of these cases the phrase—barring, of course, the difference between the singular and plural in Bernard's use of it—is the same as that seen in the *Meditaciones* and translated into *apostles apostelesse* in the *Mirror.*

Consideration of how *apostola apostolorum* is used in Latin is important here, because the twelfth century, as I mentioned in the introduction, is the time when the conflation of Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene gains traction. The phrase in Latin and its English translation are both signs meant to represent Mary Magdalene to the reader, and the events that they are meant to signify are the same in both cases. However, the way that each author chooses to signify Mary Magdalene within his own language is different.

Johannis chooses to recount the events in a way that presents them with an added affective dimension and allows the reader to draw their own conclusions. Love, conversely, is writing for a lay audience and has the added burden of having his interpretation of Mary Magdalene pass official muster from Archbishop Arundel in the wake of the anti-Lollard *Constitutions*. As he was successful in getting permission to

have the text distributed, looking at how Love's version aligns with and changes Johannis', and the reasons for the changes made in translation, will show how Mary Magdalene as a sign functions in an orthodox English context as opposed to the Latin original. In that English context, allowing a predominantly lay audience to control how they interpret a sign is dangerous in both a religious and civil sense. For this reason, Love is channeling the audience's understanding into paths that are acceptable to understood orthodoxy.

Because I am concerned with how Mary Magdalene was interpreted as a sign, I intend to use semiotics as a means to understand the ways in which both Johannis and Love deal with her as a sign. Because Mary Magdalene's signification is primarily linguistic in Johannis and Love, but is not limited to linguistic significations in the practice of Love's primarily lay audience, I start first by discussing the linguistic signification of the saint using the semiotic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure before expanding the elements of signification to include the visual. I will use Charles Sanders Peirce's parallel interpretation of semiotic theory, which includes non-linguistic elements, in conjunction with manuscript decoration and sculpture in order to show that linguistic signification is not enough to explain the saint even at the point where the concept of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* is introduced into English. Further underscoring this, I will also use two written but ultimately non-linguistic understandings of how signs and the saint function—those of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe—to assist me in understanding the nature of signification at the point *apostelesse* is introduced into English.

The Linguistic Sign – Saussure and the Multiple Planes of Linguistic Signification

In Saussure's system of semiotics, there are two parts that make up a sign: the signifier (*significant*), which is the form the sign takes, and the signified (*signifié*), which is the concept that the sign represents. The sign is the relationship between the two, and if we were to put it into a diagram, it might look something like this:

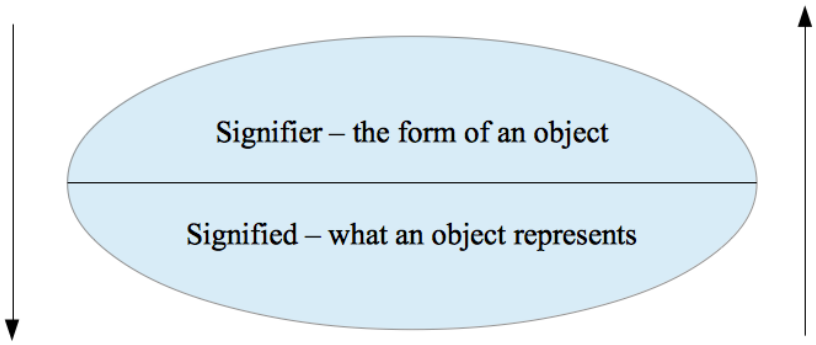

Figure 2.1 Standard diagram of the sign from the *Cours de linguistique generale*

The bisected oval represents the fact that these two parts cannot be divided and are part of a unified whole, while the arrows represent the relationship between the two.

While Saussure meant this in a purely conceptual sense as part of his studies in linguistics, the definition of a sign has evolved through the work of Roland Barthes, Fredric Jameson, and others to represent the form of the sign and the concept that the sign represents, rather than an entirely mental construct for both that Saussure intended. Their work privileged the signified, as the representation of an object, over the signifier

in its discussion of the process of signification. In turn, Jacques Derrida suggested that the signifier might in fact be associated with multiple signifieds in the service of his thoughts regarding deconstruction, a mode of thought that reflected in some ways both Aristotlean sign theory and the work of Peirce. Likewise, Jacques Lacan privileged the concrete in the form of the signifier, and suggested that there are always multiple representations possible for any particular form.

Regardless of the particular theorist working with Saussure's model, there is an underlying sense of the arbitrariness of the sign, itself an artifact of Saussure's interest in language and the production of sound over visual or conceptual symbols. Saussure's work continually discusses how the arbitrary sounds we use to represent particular things and concepts actually inform the context that we find a particular sign in. In turn, this informs how we approach that sign in relation to the other items in that context. Augustine expresses a similar idea in his *De Doctrina Christiana*, where he states "res non singulae, sed unaquaeque earum […] multa significat, pro loco sententiae, sicut posita reperitur"[9] ["things are not singular, but each one of them […] signifies many things according to the place in which it is found"]. This relationship between the sign and its context is known to Saussure as the value of a sign, and an example he uses that will become important for our discussion of Mary Magdalene as *apostles apostelesse* instead of *apostola apostolorum* is the differing values of the terms *sheep*, *mutton*, and *mouton*.

In describing these, he states that

[9] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*. In Migne, comp. PL, vol. 34 col. 79.

> Le français *mouton* puet avoir la même signification que l'anglais *sheep*, mais non la même valeur, et cela pour plusieurs raisons, en particulier parce qu'en parlant d'une pièce de viande apprêtée et servie sur la table, l'anglais dit *mutton* et non *sheep*. La différence de valeur entre *sheep* et *mouton* tient à ce que le premier a à côté de lui un second terme, ce qui n'est pas le cas pour le mot français.[10]
>
> [the French word *mouton* may have the same meaning as the English word *sheep*; but it does not have the same value. There are various reasons for this, but in particular the fact that the English word for the meat of the animal as prepared and served for a meal, is not *sheep* but *mutton*. The difference in value between *sheep* and *mouton* hinges on the fact that in English there is also another word *mutton* for the meat, whereas *mouton* in French covers both][11]

Based on the *mutton/sheep/mouton* example given above, both *apostles apostelesse* and *apostola apostolorum* appear to be doing the same sort of work linguistically. In the *Meditaciones,* Johannis states "non autem omittas Magdalenam dilectam discipulam et apostolorum apostolam,"[12] ["but forget not the Magdalene, beloved disciple and apostle of the apostles,"] which is translated by Nicholas Love as "And ȝit more ouer forȝete we nouȝt here Magdeleyne / the byloued disciplesse / and of the apostles apostlesse."[13] They are both accusative, both in apposition to Mary Magdalene's cognomen and to the description of her as a "beloved disciple," both modified by a genitive of possession, and both in a dependent clause describing her.

[10] de Saussure, 160.
[11] Harris, 114.
[12] Johannis, 314.
[13] Love, 206.

Since the phrases in both Latin and English are doing the same sort of linguistic work, at first glance the mechanism described by Saussure does not seem to apply to the phrase "apostle of the apostles." However, in discussing the arbitrary nature of the sign and the relationship between sound and thought that creates it, Saussure states that:

> La langue est encore comparable à une feuille de papier : la pensée est recto et le son le verso ; on ne puet découper le recto sans découper en même temps le verso ; de même dans la lanuge, on ne saurit isoler ni le son de la pensée, ni la pensée du son ; on n'y arriverait que par une abstraction dont le résultat serait de faire de la psychologie pure ou de la phonologie pure[14]
>
> [A language might also be compared to a sheet of paper. Thought is one side of the sheet and sound the reverse side. Just as it is impossible to take a pair of scissors and cut one side of paper without at the same time cutting the other, so it is impossible in a language to isolate sound from thought, or thought from sound. To separate the two for theorectical purposes takes us into either pure psychology or pure phonetics, not linguistics][15]

This suggests that there is more to the difference between *mouton* and *sheep* than the fact that *mouton* can also mean *mutton* and *sheep* cannot. The value of a sign can also be considered the expression of the idea contained within it through a particular arbitrary verbalization (or, for our purposes, through a particular written phrase) within the context of the system that particular value is a part of. The vertical lines in the diagram above serve to represent this link, so that the relationship between these elements can be expressed as follows:

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[14] de Saussure, 157.
[15] Harris, 111.

Figure 2.2: The relationship between linguistic signs

The system of relationships between linguistic signs is expressed by Saussure "comme une série de subdivisions contiguës dessinées à la fois sur le plan indéfini des idées confuses (A) et sur celui non moins indéterminé des sons (B)"[16] ["as a series of adjoining subdivisions simultaneously imprinted both on the plane of vague, amorphous thought (A) and on the equally featureless plane of sound (B)"].[17] Thus, the difference in value between *mouton* and *sheep* does not just hinge on the difference in the signifier for each, but on the fact that the relationship between signifier and signified must be different because the phrase is articulated in different linguistic environments.

I wish to stress this particular point because a similar mechanism is in place regarding the phrases *apostola apostolorum* and *apostles apostelesse*. While both terms translate to "apostle of the apostles," their differing languages, each with their own register and audience—an international, well-educated and religious audience in the case of Latin as opposed to a mixed audience of religious and laity, possibly equally educated but provincial, in the case of English—will shade the meaning of the phrase even when the intended concept regarding Mary Magdalene is similar. This difference does not

[16] de Saussure, 155-156.
[17] Harris, 110.

mean that the two planes represented by *apostola apostolorum* and *apostles apostelsse* have no contact with each other after Love's introduction of the phrase into English, but it does mean that there is an environment of English-speakers, without Latin, for whom Love's *Mirror* will be their primary introduction to the concept of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* in the manner described by *apostola* in the *Meditaciones*. For this reason, it will be useful to consider the environment of each at the time of Love's translation.

The phrase *apostola apostolorum* is a reference to the events of Mark 16:9-10 and John 20:17-18, where Christ specifically commands Mary Magdalene, "dice eis ascendo ad Patrem meum et Patrem vestrum et Deum meum et Deum vestrum" ["tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"].[18] This is the only version of the events at Christ's tomb that has Mary Magdalene tell the apostles of his resurrection unaccompanied. In Matthew, another woman named Mary accompanies her; in Luke Joanna, James' mother Mary, and other women do so; and although Mary Magdalene is referenced in Mark as being the one who told the apostles of Christ's resurrection, it is only in later manuscripts and the analogous section regarding the events at the tomb has Mary Magdalene accompanied by James' mother Mary and Mary Salome. The later accounts seem to be influenced by John.

Thus, it is on the basis of that account in John, reinforced by later manuscripts of Mark, that she is considered to be an *apostola*. Since *apostola* stems from the Greek word ἀπόστολος, linguistically an apostle is the person who is caused to carry a message away. Mary Magdalene as *apostola apostolorum* is the one who takes the message away

[18] Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

from Christ. However, the *apostolorum* portion of the construction limits exactly how she functions as an apostle. Since she is an apostle of the apostles, that status refers only to the singular events in the gospels, rather than the larger apostolic mission of those to whom she took Christ's message.

Surprisingly, the phrase *apostola apostolorum* does not appear in the section of the *Meditaciones* referring to the events at the tomb. That section, chapters LXXXIII-LXXXV, discusses both Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene alone as well as his appearance to her along with Mary Jacobi and Mary Salome. The phrase appears instead in chapter LXCI, entitled "Quomodo Dominus apparavit discipvlis vniversis in die resvrreccionis" ["How the Lord appeared to the Disciples on the day of resurrection"] and with a reference to Luke 24—which begins with the events at the tomb. Since the same scriptural events are referenced both here and in the chapters that deal directly with those events, looking at what these two accounts are attempting to do will provide some insight into how Mary Magdalene is functioning as a sign in Johannis' mind. From there, I will look at what changes occur when Nicholas Love translates these sections in English in his *Mirror*.

Mary, the Marys, and the Tomb

While there is a short reference to the three Marys going to the tomb with ointments in Chapter LXXXII of the *Meditaciones Vitae Christi*, which is entitled "De Revelacione Domini et Primo Quomodo Apparavit Matri," ["of the Lord's Revelation and in what way he first made ready his mother], Chapter LXXXIII, entitled "Quomodo Maria Magdalena et alie Marie ivervnt ad monvmentvm," ["How Mary Magdalene and

the other two Marys went to the tomb,"] is where Johannis discusses the events of the revelation of Christ to the three Marys in depth. It is a recounting primarily of the Gospel account in Matthew and Mark, with a portion of John.[19] However, the *Meditaciones* adds information to the events in order to explicate them and reconcile them to the expectations of a mid-fourteenth century audience. First, where the Vulgate states "Maria Magdalene et Maria Iacobi et Salome emerunt aromata ut venientes unguerent eum. Et valde mane una sabbatorum veniunt ad monumentum orto iam sole. Et dicebant ad invicem quis revolvet nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti"[20] ["When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices with which to go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. They had been saying to one another 'who will roll away the tone for us from the entrance to the tomb?'"] the account in the *Meditaciones* refers to the stations of the cross as well. The three women first "reuocabant ad memoriam afflicciones et penas Magistri sui et in omnibus locis in quibus contra ipsum notabiliter uel per ipsum factum fuerat aliquid aliquantulum subsistebant; genuflectentes et osculates terram"[21] ["called to mind the afflictions and pains of their master, and in all the places where something had been done to him, they would stand still, kneel, and kiss the ground"] before making specific connections between their actions and the stations:

[19] Matthew 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-8, John 20:2-20-10.
[20] Mark 16:1-3. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.
[21] Johannis, 302.

> Hic obuiauimus ei cum cruce super collo quando mater eius semimortua facta est, et hic se uertit ad mulieres. Hic crucem deposuit fatigatus et super isto lapide se appodiauit parumper; hic fuit ubi sic crudeliter et fortiter impulerunt eum ut uelocius ambularet et quasi eum currere coegerunt. Hic spoliauerunt eum nudum et hic eum crucis patibulo affixerunt.[22]
>
> [Here we met him with the cross on his shoulders, when his mother was made nearly dead, and here he turned to the women. Here, wearied, he put down the cross and leaned for a little while on this stone. Here, they struck him cruelly and harshly to make him walk faster, and forced him to run almost. Here the stripped him nude and here they fastened him to the cross.]

Johannis is reinforcing the concept of pilgrimage as a contemplative act, as the women are not simply visiting the stations but are re-experiencing the events that occurred and the emotions they felt at each station. The audience, in turn, recognizes what is occurring as the same actions that they themselves would undergo when they went on pilgrimage to the holy land, which makes the events present in their spiritual experience in a way that the scriptural account may not.

The effectiveness of this model of connecting the events of salvation history to contemporary piety can be seen in the pilgrimage of Margery Kempe to Jerusalem. As she notes, after spending from evensong to evensong in the Temple "þe frerys lyftyd up a cros & led þe pylg*ri*mys a-bowte from [on] place to an-oþer wher owyr Lord had sufferyd hys [peynys] and his passyons."[23] Emotional connection begets physical action, which in turn reinforces the sense of connection to the scriptural events. This attempt to

[22] Ibid.
[23] Kempe, 68.

physically reproduce the events of the Passion does not occur in a vacuum, however. Kempe states that "þe frerys al-wey, as þei went a-bowte, teld hem what owyr Lord sufferyd in eu*er*y place."[24] The friars thus channel emotional response—Kempe remarks that she "wept & sobbyd so plentyvowsly as þow sche had seyn owyr Lord wyth hir bodyly ey suffering hys Passyon at þat tyme"—into acceptable expressions.

Similarly, as the three Marys finally arrive at the cross after passing through the events of the Passion, they resignify it as a Christian symbol for the audience by kissing and adoring it, "adhuc precioso sanguine Domini rubricatam"[25] ["yet red with the precious blood of the Lord"]. Kempe, upon reaching Calvery and still emotionally connected to the events of the passion, behaves like the three Marys, falling down "þ*a*t sche mygth not stondyn ne knelyn but walwyd & wrestyd wyth hir body, spredyng hir armys a-brode, & cryd w*yth* a lowed voys as þow hir hert xulde a brostyn a-sundyr, for in þe cite of her sowle she saw verily & freschly how owyr Lord was crucified."[26]

Another reminder of the emotional resonance of the scriptural account occurs later in the chapter. Johannis attempts to explain the various differences in the Gospels at the tomb by first reminding the audience that "paulo ante audierat ab uno angelo quod resurrexerat et postea a duobus quia uiuebat, et non recordabatur"[27] ["a little while before [Mary Magdalene] had heard from one angel that he was risen, and from two others that he was alive, and she did not remember"]. He then invokes Origen to explain

[24] Ibid.
[25] Johannis, 302.
[26] Kempe, 68.
[27] Johannis, 304.

that "anima sua non erat ubi ipsa erat sed ubi ipse Magister suus erat"[28] ["her soul was not here, where she was, but there, where her Master was"]. In Mary Magdalene's grief, "nesciebat cogitare loqui uel audire nisi de ipso"[29] ["she did not know how to think, speak, or hear anything except of him"]. Because of her love for Christ—something that will be emphasized again and again throughout the texts treated in this dissertation—Johannis states that Christ "refert hec matri sue et dicit quod uult ire ad consolandum eam"[30] ["turns to his mother and says that he wants to go comfort her"]. Approving, the Virgin says in response "uade in pace et consoleris eam, quia multum te diligit, et de tua morte plurimum doluit; et memento redire ad me"[31] ["go in peace and console her, for she loves you very much, and of your death has much grief; and remember to return to me"]. This connection between the Virgin Mary, Christ, and Mary Magdalene occurs throughout the Christological years in Johannis. Interestingly, by having the Virgin accede to Christ's request to go and comfort Mary Magdalene, Johannis is first acknowledging and reinforcing the increased role of the Virgin Mary as compassionate intercessor in late medieval theology. He also suggests that Christ's power is not absolute, but requires permission of a sort from his mother, a suggestion reinforced by the Virgin's use of the phrase "vade in pace." This phrase is significant because of its role in the sacrament of penance and because Christ himself used it when forgiving the sins of Mary Magdalene.

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

These actions by the three Marys, Christ, and the Virgin in Johannis are an act of resignification akin to the *mutton/sheep/mouton* example given above. The events that occur are the same in both cases, but the way that Johannis has chosen to recount them suggests an added, affective dimension that is not foregrounded in the scripture. Rather than let readers accept that affective dimension and draw their own conclusions from it, Love will explain to the audience what is intended by recounting this episode.

After Peter and John have come to the tomb, discovered that Christ is missing, and left, Johannis then recounts the visit of the two angels to the three Marys. Love, however, explains for his audience precisely what lesson they are intended to take away from what is to come. He notes "also here we haue ensaumple þat oft siþes before ioy: Comeþ grete discomfort, & sorowe, þe which is to be born paciently for þe tyme, & euer Jesu to be souht & called one by deuout praiere & feruent desire."[32] This adds a contemporary dimension to the events at the tomb beyond even that of Johannis. There, Johannis is encouraging emotional connection between the audience and the events at the tomb, but leaves the way the events are understood to be determined by the reader. The resurrection and its associated events are a sign, but they are a sign explainable in many different ways. In the religious climate of the time of Love's text, in light of Arundel's statement that those who judge the church "reverendissimae synodo injuriam fecisse dignoscitur"[33] ["wrong the most reverend synod]"], allowing an audience to control how they interpret a sign is not only seen as dangerous in a religious sense, but in

[32] Love, 198.
[33] Arundel, 314-19.

very real civil sense as well. By explaining exactly what the reader is supposed to take away from the visitation of the angels, Love is channeling the audience's understanding into channels acceptable to understood orthodoxy at the time.

Etching the Circuit of Emotion: Love and the *Quem Quaeritis*

Forging a stronger emotional connection between the audience and the events of salvation history while at the same time controlling how that connection is to be interpreted by the audience is also a major priority of Love's translation of Johannis' chapter LXXXIV, entitled "Quomodo Dominus apparuit Magdalene" ["How the Lord appeared to the Magdalene"], which recounts the *quem quaeritis* moment. In this chapter, there are two points where Johannis directly engages with the reader. He first asks the reader to "conspice bene eam quomode lacrimabili uultu, suppliciter eu deuote ipsum exorate ut doceat eam illum quem querit: semper enim sperabat audire aliqua noua de suo dilecto"[34] ["Look at her tearful face well, how she humbly and devoutly entreats him to lead her to him who she seeks; for she always hoped to hear something new about her beloved"] at the moment of the *quem quaeritis*. He then explicates the reasons behind the noli me tangere for the audience:

> Ipsa uero curiose aspicit eum et interrogat de singulis et responsum alacritatis recipit […] Licet autem sic eidem a principio Dominus responderit, uix credere possum quin eum familiariter tangeret antequam inde discederet, deosculando pedes et manus. Sed dispensacione sic fecit a principio uel quia talem se ostendebat, qualis erat in corde suo secundum communem exposicionem; uel quia, ut dixi, uolebat animum suum erigere ad celestia, secundum quod beatus Bernardus innuere

[34] Johannis, 304.

> uidetur. Pie namque credi potest quod quam sic amanter et singulariter ante omnes qui scripti reperiantur uisitabat: ad non turbandam earn faciebat. Misterialiter igitur non pertinaciter dixit illud uerbum: quia non pertinax neque durus benignissimus Dominus est, et maxime diligentibus se.[35]
>
> [She looked at him closely and asked him about each thing, and he answered willingly […] I can hardly believe she did not have a familiar touch, kissing his feet and hands, before he departed from her. But he acted in this manner either because in this way he exposed himself as he was in her heart, as is the common exposition, or because he wished to elevate her soul to the things of heaven, as Bernard seems to indicate. One can piously believe that he visited her thus lovingly and individually before all the others referred to in writings not to disturb her, but for her pleasure. Mysteriously, therefore, not stubbornly did he speak those words. For the most merciful Lord is not stubborn or hard-hearted, especially not to those that love him.]

Johannis clarifies exactly what he wishes the reader to understand regarding this particular encounter. He helps to explain this understanding first in relation to the commonly understand explanation for the *noli me tangere,* and then to the writings of Saint Bernard.

In writing his translation of Johannis (chapter LII of the *Mirror*), Love opens with the exchange between Christ and the Virgin Mary that is the close of Johannis' chapter LXXXIII, entitled "Quomodo Maria Magdalena et alie Marie iuerunt ad monumentum" ["How Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the monument"]. As the chapter breaks appear to vary among different versions of the *Meditaciones,* this choice on Love's part could indicate a choice made by the scribes of the exemplar from which he was working. It could also, however, indicate that Love felt that the connection

[35] Johannis, 305.

between Mary Magdalene and Christ—which is, after all, the subject of this chapter—warranted the placement of this material with the *quem quaeritis* and *noli me tangere* episodes. In either case, much like the ways in which particular linguistic associations change the relationship between *sheep, mouton,* and *mutton* even though the words refer to the same animal, Love's placing of the unembellished episode here associates it with the relationship between Christ and Mary Magdalene, rather than with Johannis' association between Christ and the Virgin.

While this new introduction is not embellished from the version at the end of chapter LXXXIII in the *Meditaciones*, almost immediately thereafter Love begins to explicate the elements of the *quem quaeritis* and *noli me tangere* episodes for his audience. First, he explains that Christ, in asking why Mary Magdalene wept, did so "to þat ende as seynt *Gregour* seiþ: that by hir answere in þe nemyng of him, þe fire of loue sholde be more feruently kyndelet in hir herte."[36] Where Johannis is willing to let the audience make assumptions as to why Christ asked, again Love leaves nothing to chance. Similarly, he goes on to declare the signification of Christ-as-gardener, noting that "þouh oure lorde was not bodily a gardinere, neuerles as þe same clerke gregore seiþ, he was so in soþe gostly to her. For he was, þat planted in hir herte þe plantes of vertues & trewe loues."[37] Love's explanation replaces the first explication by Johannis, which more directly asked readers to contemplate the face of the tearful Mary Magdalene. Instead, he attempts to control the interpretation of the emotional and

[36] Love, 199.
[37] Love, 200.

contemplative connections Johannis encourages and calls upon the authority of Gregory, who is absent from the analogous event in the *Meditaciones*, in order to do so.

Love makes a similar rhetorical maneuver in his discussion of the *noli me tangere*. There, Johannis simply recounts the words of John 20:17: "Dominus uero uolens animum suum eleuare ad celestia ut non quereret eum in terra, dixit: *Noli me tangere, nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem meum, sed dic fratribus meis: Ascendo ad Patrem meum, et Patrem uestrum, Deum meum et Dominum uestrum*"[38] ["However the Lord, wanting to raise her soul to the heavens so that she would not search for him on Earth, said *'Do not touch me, I am not yet ascended to my Father, but say to my brothers: I ascend to my Father and your Father, My God and your Lord'*"]. Love, conversely, feels the need to break up and explicate the scriptural verse:

> Wherfore oure lorde willyng to lift vp gostly hir herte & hir affeccion to heuene & to þe godhede, & þat she sholde no more seke him in erþe in maner as she dide before when he was deadly, seide, *Touche me not* in þat erþely manere, *for I haue not steyhen vp to my fadere,* þat is to sey, I am not ȝit lift vp in þi soule by trewe & perfite byleue, þat I am euene with þe fadere verrey god, & þerfore touch me not in þat manere inperfitely. *Bot go & sey to my breþerne, I stey vp to my fadere & ȝour fadere, to my god & ȝour god.*[39]

This passage and the previous example suggest an anxiety regarding translation that stems, in part, from the implicit threat of Lollardy and the explicit threats to those who preach without authorization under Arundel's *Constitutions*. Arundel notes that

[38] Johannis, 305.
[39] Love, 200.

"periculosa quoque res est, testante beato Jeronymo, textum sacrae scripturae de uno in aliud idioma transferre"[40] ["It is a dangerous thing, as blessed Jerome testifies, to translate holy scripture from one tongue to another"], and since that is precisely what Johannis is doing in writing the *Mirror*, Love finds it necessary to explain what is meant by these episodes in order to not "aut auctoritatem eorundem decretorum, decretalium, aut constitutionum, potestatemve condentis eadem in dubium [revocare], sive contra determinationem eorundem [docere]"[41] ["call into question the authority of the said decrees, decretals, or constitutions, or the authority of him that made them, or to preach contrary to their determination"].

Just such a concern about uncontrolled preaching is the source of Margery Kempe's problems after her return from Jerusalem. When she journeyed to Leicester on her way back from Bristol, she was imprisoned by the Mayor and accused of Lollardy. As she recalls

> Sythyn ȝed she forth to Leycetyr […] sche cam in-to a fayr church wher sche beheld a crucyfyx was petowsky pointed & lamentably to be-heldyn thorw wech beheldyng þe Passyon of owr Lord entryd hir mende, whe<r>thorw sche gan meltyn & al-to-relentyn be terys of pyte & co*m*passyown. Þa*n* þe fyer of lofe kyndelyd so ȝern in hir hert þ*a*t sche myth not kepyn it p*re*uy for, whedyr sche wolde er not, it cawsyd hir to brekyn owte wyth a lowed voys & cryen merueylowslyche & wepyn & sobbyn full hedowslyche þat many a man and woman wondryd on hir þerfor.[42]

[40] Arundel, 317.
[41] Ibid., 318.
[42] Kempe, 111.

The reason for this outburst, if not its vehemence, is acceptable under Arundel's *Constitutions* as he remarks that people are not to preach against "adorationem crucis gloriosae, imaginum, sanctorum venerationes, seu peregrinationes ad loca, aut reliquias eorundem"[43] ["adoration of the glorious cross, the veneration of images of the saints, or pilgrimages to their places and relics"]. However, because of that vehemence, and because she refuses to explain why she wept, Kempe is taken "in gret hast" to speak with the Mayor. After questioning who she is and where she comes from, he insists that she is "a fals stru*m*pet, a fals loller, & a fals deceyu*er* of þe pepyl," and places her in prison.[44] The exchange between Kempe and the Steward of Leicester, which occurs immediately after the imprisonment, speaks to the importance of language in the development of signs at this point. Kempe notes that "þe Styward […] spak Latyn vn-to hir, many p*re*st*ys* stondy*ng* a-bowtyn to here what sche xulde say & oþ*er* pepyl also. Sche seyd to þe Stywarde, 'spekyth Englysch, yf ȝow lyketh, for I vndyrstonde not what ȝe sey.' Þe Styward seyd vn-to hir 'Þu lyest falsly in pleyn Englysch.'"[45]

Kempe's exchange at Leicester suggests that in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century, a connection exists between an emotional, affective response and the notion of vernacular preaching that is tied up in the sort of symbolic shifts between

[43] Arundel, 318.
[44] While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is interesting to note how this interaction attempts to resignify Kempe as a saintly figure in the fashion of Katherine. See Kempe, 111-112, for the mayor's direct comparison between her and the saint and the jailor's response to the mayor's sentence. From this it seems obvious that the primary concern of the mayor is to maintain social order. See also Watson and Riddy for a discussion of how these events affected the composition of the *Book*; Cole for further information on Margery Kempe and Lollardy as a social movement rather than Wycliffism as a religious movement; and Van Engen for information on Kempe's attempts to authorize her practice put in a larger context of fifteenth-century piety.
[45] Kempe, 112-113.

signifier and signified that occur with *sheep/mutton/mouton* according to Saussure. Just as Saussure notes that *mouton* and *sheep* have the same meaning but have differing values because *mouton* also defines the meat of the animal, the differing meanings of affective piety and vernacular preaching in the social grammar of early fifteenth-century England are at least subtextually equivalent in value. Furthermore, the implication of Kempe's questioning at Leicester and later at York is that the sort of emotional, direct response that Johannis is attempting to engender in his audience through his explication of biblical events is seen as suspect, and for this reason Love feels the need, when translating the *Meditaciones,* to control how exactly the audience experiences that emotional, affective connection through expressly stating what the scriptural words mean.

Apostola Apostolorum or *Apostles Apostelesse*: when is a *Sheep Mutton* and when is it *Mouton*?

The actual phrase "apostles Apostlesse" appears in Love's chapter LVII, which is a translation of chapter LXCI of the *Meditaciones.* There, Johannis admonishes "non autem omittas Magdalenam dilectam discipulam et apostolorum apostolam" ["do not forget Magdalene, the beloved disciple and apostle of the apostles"] before going on to note that "qualiter sedet […] ad pedes Magistri sui; diligenter audit uerba eius, et si quid eciam potest ipsa, gaudiose ac tot affectu eidem ministrat"[46] ["she sits in her usual way […] at the feet of her Master; diligently she listens to his words; and if there is anything she can do, joyously, with her whole mind, she ministers to him"]. Love renders this as

[46] Johannis, 314.

"forȝete we not here Maudeleyn þe belouede disciples & of þe apostles Apostelesse. How she after her old manere sitteþ at þe feete of hir maister, & bisily hereþ his wordes, & alle þat she may gladly & with gude wille ministreþ" in a translation that is faithful to the *Meditaciones*.[47] The lack of overt explication in this instance is worth noting because the *vita* of Mary Magdalene as recounted by Jacobus de Voragine—where her primary post-scriptural activity is preaching as a woman—also refers to her as *apostola apostolorum* precisely at the point where the narrative transitions between the scriptural and legendary activity. As we have seen with Kempe, a woman who is both able to travel and is too expressive in her affective devotion already was a problematic sign within the context of early-fifteenth century England, unless she could be properly placed into an acceptable category and her actions signified in relation to that category. That Kempe was married, but dressed as though she were a recluse or in orders, and preached, but claimed not to preach due to her lack of a pulpit, presented her as someone who could not be properly placed and was thus unclassifiable. Her refusal, in this case, to explain the context of her weeping at Leicester underscored the alien nature of her conduct and made her suspect as a possible Lollard and thus a threat to the civil and ecclesiastical authority in England.

In discussing women preachers and Lollardy, Alcuin Blamires remarks that "Mary Magdalene and Saint Catherine were […] held up for admiration and emulation […] For women who felt inspired to emulate them, only two alternatives seemed open. They could teach within the cloister, discreetly, if they became abbesses: or they could

[47] Love, 206.

become heretics."[48] If these are the only perceived options available to women, then a woman who is obviously not an abbess due to her marital status, but who behaves at times as though she were in orders, must be a heretic. The actual circumstances of her religious practice do not matter—the constraints placed upon signification create a binary that Kempe does not fit into neatly. Moreover, in a contemporary trial before the Bishop of Hereford, the Lollard Walter Brut attempts to justify female preaching by obliquely referencing Mary Magdalene's position as *apostola apostolorum.* His influence, Henry of Ghent, goes further, directly referencing Mary and Martha in his justification: "Maria & Martha cum Apostolis genera linguarum acceperunt & publice sicut Apostoli docuisse, & praedicasse leguntur"[49] ["we read that Mary and Martha received the variety of langauges with the apostles and taught publically in the same way as the Apostles and preached"]. Since the reference to her as apostle to the apostles is used to provide authorization for female preaching in fourteenth-century England,[50] it is odd that this phrase is directly translated and not explained as others have been.

Superficially, the lack of additional detail suggests that Love's concern in explicating the *Mirror* is with the translation of scripture from Latin into English and controlling the audience's understanding of their faith. While Love does change elements of this chapter for his audience, the change he makes expounds on how exactly one is to keep Christ in mind on the days prior to Easter Sunday as a replacement for a section in Johannis which serves as a preface for genealogical information regarding the

[48] Blamires, "Women and Preaching,"151.
[49] Blamires, "Woman Not to Preach," para. 3.
[50] Capes, 345; MS. Harley 31, fol. 219, 194v-196v.

generations of Christ. Rather than using the opportunity to undermine the Lollard position regarding female preachers, Love instead concerns himself with information that has no direct relation to Lollardy or Mary Magdalene.

However, what is related to Mary Magdalene, and through her to questions of Lollardy, is the reference to "her old manere" in Love's translation. This aside is not present in the Latin, and the intent of it is to remind the reader of Mary Magdalene's role as the contemplative portion of the active/contemplative binary. As Giles Constable notes, Mary (here as Mary of Bethany, who was subsumed into the composite Mary Magdalene) and Martha are one of a number of biblical binaries intended to compare the active and contemplative lives in keeping with the notion of the "optimam partem," or better part, from Luke 10:42.[51] Love, in translating Johannis, speaks extensively of this split, but the specific instance he referring to from at this point is his chapter XXXIII, where he observes that Mary Magdalene was "sittyng & tentyng onely to þe swete contemplacion of Jesu" as part of a paraphrase of the events in Luke. This paraphrase, in turn, serves as an introduction to a discussion of the active and contemplative lives.

This whole discussion, with Johannis' chapters XLVI-LVIII at its core, is heavily altered by Love and reduced to two chapters. He centers it on two points regarding the active and contemplative lives that serve as a counter to Lollard notions of female preaching and explain why he did not feel the need to explicate the phrase *apostola apostolorum* as he did with the scriptural text. First, Love makes the point that the active

[51] See Constable, 1-43 for a discussion of how the two sisters functioned within the active/contemplative binary that the "optimam partem" comes to represent.

and contemplative lives, as he is explaining them in the *Mirror*, "longeþ specialy to spirtuel persones as bene prelates, preachours & religiouse," removing the inclusive language Johannis uses when he provides the qualifier "precipue religiosam uitam agentibus" ["especially to those who live a religious life"] at the end of the analogous text in the *Meditaciones.*[52] That qualifier makes it clear that what Johannis is saying is for both clergy and laity.

Love's choice to not translate the Latin qualifier is particularly interesting because he has just stressed that Johannis' discussion of the active and contemplative lives "semeþ as impertinent in gret party to many comune persones & simple soules,"[53] as opposed to the largely ecclesiastical audience of Johannis. The concern for his audience expressed here does not, apparently, extend to recounting every single element of Johannis' discussion, a fact underscored when he notes that he will "passen ouere shortly taking þereof þat semeþ profitable & edificatife to oure purpose at þis tyme." In paraphrasing Johannis, Love modifies Johannis' qualifier indicating the text is of special importance to religious people, suggesting instead that the text applies only to religious people.

I do not believe this is simply an error. Love uses the authority not just of Johannis as "Bonaventure," but also of Saint Bernard, who is cited as one of Johannis' sources, to suggest that the active and contemplative lives are not the province of the laity. Since this book is in English, it can compete on equal footing with the vernacular

[52] Johannis, 172.
[53] Love, 120.

works of the Lollards, and the average layperson lacks the Latin to go back to Johannis and realize that the original language was far more inclusive. Since part of Love's goal is to contain the Lollard heresy, restricting the active and contemplative lives to those who are "safe," his translation makes the classification of who is or is not a Lollard much easier.

Having specified the types of individuals who could expect to live the active and contemplative lives, Love also makes the point that the active life is split into two portions—the first being "þat manere of lyuyng by þe which a mannus bisinesse stant principaly in þat exercise, þat longeþ to his own gostly profite" and the second being "gouernyng of oþer men & teching, & helping to þe hele of soule, as done prelates & prechours & oþer þat hauen care of soule."[54] This secondary aspect is called the "perfite actif life" by Love.[55]

According to Love, the path that Mary Magdalene represents—that of the contemplative that leads into the "perfect active" life—is open only to those people who fit the narrow category he defines through omission above. Moreover, he lays out for his readers how someone can achieve that path: by knowing "hem self bisily, if þei done none harme to hir neihborgh & if þei bere paciently harmes & wronges done to hem of oþer men."[56] He goes on to explain further that the contemplative "haþ ensaumple in Marie of þre þinges þat nedeþ souereynly to þat astate, þat bene mekenes, pacience, & silence." He then signifies each by some action of Mary's: the meekness is signified by

[54] Ibid.
[55] Love, 121.
[56] Ibid., 122.

her sitting at Christ's feet, which in turn represents "þe herte of him þat is in þis degree of contemplacion, þat is to sey þat he presume not of his owne holynesse, but þat he despise him self trewly in his owne siht as it is seide before in diuerse places, what longeþ to mekenes"; the patience is signified by "suffryng fals demynges, skornynges, & reprouynges of þe world þat he shal suffer þat fully forsakeþ & despiseþ þe world as it nedeþ to þe trewe contemplatife, committing alewy by patience in herte"; and the silence is signified by suffering these misfortunes "without answere reprouyng aȝeyn as Marie dide, when þe Pharisee demede & reproued hir […] & the disciple hade indignacion & grucched aȝeynus hir."[57] This final virtue is so important to Love's idea of contemplation that he goes on to note that Mary Magdalene

> so ferforþ […] ȝafe ensaumple of silence þat we finde not in all þe gospel þat she spake before þe resurrexione of oure lorde saue ones, by a short word at þe reising of hir broþer Lazare, not wiþstandyng þe grete loue þat oure lord Jesus hewed to hir, & þe grete likyng þat she hade in þe words & þe holi doctrine of him, þat shold stir hir by reson þe more boldly to speke.[58]

Mary Magdalene, by virtue of her representation as exemplar of the contemplative life, is a representation of silence as a virtue. For this reason, her role as *apostola apostolorum* is not something that Love feels he has to explicate. He has already preemptively corrected any possible impulse on the part of women (and indeed, on laypeople in general) to preach by first limiting them to only those roles that are socially

[57] Ibid., 124.
[58] Ibid.

acceptable under the structures of the institutional church—nun or recluse. He then suggests that the way they can most emulate Mary Magdalene as exemplar is not through preaching, but through suffering in silence. Moreover, they are to do this by trial and error, as he says that "whoso coueiteþ to knowe þe fruit of vertuese silence, if he haue affeccion & wille to trewe contemplative lyuyng, without doute he shal be bettur tauht by experience, þen by writing or teching of man." While the laity can admire the actions of Mary Magdalene—and the proliferation of copies of the *Legenda Aurea* throughout the fifteenth century suggests that they do—emulation of her in the style that Kempe alludes to can occur only if the laity experience Mary Magdalene's virtue, silence, which automatically labels any action taken that is not simple "virtuous silence" suspect. Oddly, however, in spite of suggesting that writing or preaching cannot teach what silence can, Love immediately goes on to name sources in support of his statements: "seynt *bernard,* & many oþere holi fadres & doctours" as well as "þe tretees þat þe worthi clerk & holi lyuere Maister Walter Hilton þe Chanon of Thurgarton wrote in english by grete grace & hye discrecion."[59]

The inclusion of Hilton here by Love seems to suggest that he's trying to provide an acceptable channel for lay devotion without having to explicate Johannis fully. He states that Hilton's work would be good for those "þat longeþ to contemplative lyuyng, & specialy to a recluse, & also of medelet life, þat is to sey sumtyme actife & sumtyme contemplative, as it longeþ to diuerse persones þat in wordly astate hauen grace of gostly

[59] Ibid. Interestingly, at least one copy (Beinecke MS 660) of the *Privity of the Passion*, a portion of the *Mirror* that circulated separately from the whole text, ends up being attributed to Hilton, likely on the basis of this reference by Love.

loue."[60] Since Hilton's writings were apparently known to Kempe,[61] this advice was likely the orthodox solution to lay individuals who wished to pursue a quasi-religious life. However, note that Love is suggesting here that the laity should either perform their contemplation as a recluse or pursue a mixed life. He says nothing of the laity performing the "perfect active" life that comes out of contemplation, and that seems to be the type of life Kempe's self-resignification was designed to represent.

That Kempe follows aspects of the contemplative life as outlined by Love—most notably (at least according to her words) patience in suffering false accusations and silence when others complained about her—suggests that these ideas had currency beyond the cloisters or Hilton's work. Kempe's reaction to the Steward of Leicester and the Archbishop of York, however, suggest that these ideas were only partially understood (or perhaps only partially accepted) by her but more importantly that Lollardy was seen as a threat because it challenged and spoke out against perceived ecclesiastical and social error, rather than because it believed in the primacy of the Bible over established tradition. When Kempe's position, which is largely orthodox, is compared to that of the accepted (but controlled by virtue of her anchoritic status) Julian of Norwich, there can be little question that Kempe's problems stem not from translation, as the *Constitutions* would suggest is the issue with Lollardy, but instead from her refusal to remain silent, as she is expected to and Julian largely does by putting her visions into writing and remaining within the confines of her anchorhold. Kempe is

[60] Ibid.
[61] Kempe, 39, 143.

attempting to follow the example of the saints, including Mary Magdalene (to whom she claims Christ compared her in her *Book,* after all), while ignoring that the official position in Arundel's England regarding Mary Magdalene is that her virtue is silence, not speech. Outspoken saints are an artifact of biblical times and an unwelcome addition to the social order.

Moreover, that the Lollards themselves gave little weight to saints, including Mary Magdalene, meant that they were at a disadvantage in using her significations in support of their actions, as Kempe tries to do. Brut's attempt to utilize her is only a half-hearted, oblique reference without even the direct attribution of Henry of Ghent. For orthodoxy, however, the need to control Lollard influence made her significations—including *apostola apostolorum*, with its useful genitive qualifier—helpful to those who would defend religious orthodoxy and translate Latin works into the vernacular to better do so.

Both Johannis' *Meditaciones* and Love's *Mirror* represent different reception environments for the phrase "apostle to the apostles" as a sign, with differing sets of meanings regarding the saint. While these meanings and their contexts are not necessarily important when considering the phrase as a phrase within either Johannis or Love's texts, the context becomes essential when considering the saint as a figure—a received, evolving, and transmitted concept—throughout the fifteenth century. The figure of Mary Magdalene can be seen as a semiotic "packet" that travels though a contextual "network" of its relations to other ideas, objects, practices, and discourses that shape its meaning, at all moments and from all directions, for individuals who have

access to or privilege some parts of that network. In order to consider Mary Magdalene in this way, I will need to begin by defining more fully the packet, the network, and the relationship between them.

The Semiotic Packet

While Saussurean semiotics suffices to explain the importance of the phrase *apostles apostelesse,* as translated from *apostola apostolorum,* in thinking about Mary Magdalene from a linguistic standpoint at the dawn of the fifteenth century, it also reveals the limitations of thinking about the saint in primarily linguistic terms. If one considers a visual representation of the saint as *apostola apostolorum*, such as those in the Paris Bible Moralisée (MS. Bodl. 270b) or the Queen Mary Psalter (BL MS. Royal 2 B VII), it becomes clear that there are a number of factors that go into representing the saint as an *apostola apostolorum* that are not considered in analysis of the linguistic sign.

A  B 

Figure 2.3: Images from the Bible Moralisée (MS. Bodl. 270b, fol. 182r). A: a roundel showing Mary Magdalene as *Apostola Apostolorum*. B: the roundel in context.

A  B 

Figure 2.4: Mary Magdalene as *Apostola Apostolorum* from the Queen Mary Psalter (BL MS Royal 2 B VII, fol. 301r). A: the specific scene. B: the image in context, with the Psalter's depiction of the *noli me tangere* (300v-301r)

That need to explicate image with text, text with image, or image with other images suggests that, when speaking of Mary Magdalene, a simple dyadic sign, even in the appropriate context, is not necessarily enough to get across what is actually meant regarding the saint. Even assuming that the tightly controlled image, with signifying elements such as the alabastrum, was used as an aid to the illiterate or solely English-speaking in public spaces such as the cathedral or parish church, there are still instances where saints are depicted figurally, including their attributes, alongside text explicating that figure, as can be seen in Norwich Cathedral:

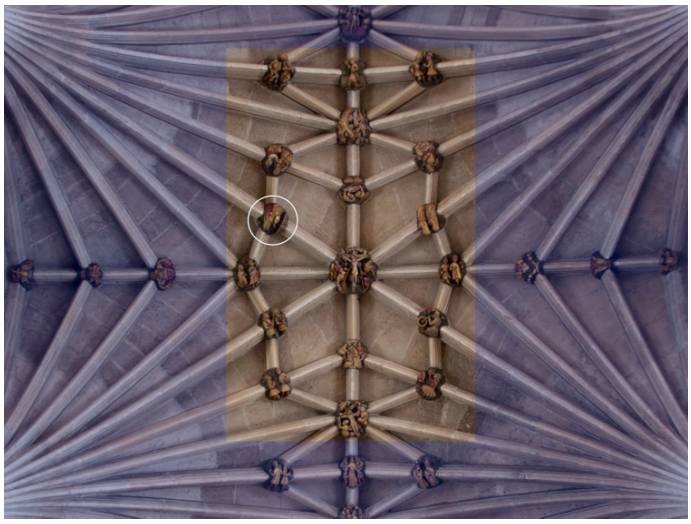
A  B 

Figure 2.5: Mary Magdalene from roof boss NL14, Norwich Cathedral. A: the particular boss. B: the boss (indicated by the circle) in its context, associated with the other items in bay NL (the unshaded area of the rectangle) and adjacent bays or non-narrative decorative elements (the shaded area of the rectangle). The bottom of the image points towards the altar, and the top towards the main entrance to the nave.

Additionally, as can be seen by the image of the roof boss *in situ*, the sign indicating the saint—regardless of whether it is a visual, textual, or linguistic sign—operates as part of a visual context that affects how it is to be interpreted individually and as part of a larger whole. Such a visual context can also be expressed linguistically, but only imperfectly, like Julian of Norwich's reference to her vision of Christ on the cross:

> I saw with bodily sight the face of the crucifixe that hange before me, in whilke I beheld co*n*tynuely a party of his passyo*n*n: despite, spittynge in sowlynge of his bodye *and* buffetynge in his blysfulle face, *and* many langoures and paynes, ma than I can tell, and ofte chaungynge of coloure, and all his blyssede face a tyme closede in dry blode. This I saw bodylye *and* hevelye *and* derkeleye; and I desired mare bodelye light to hafe sene

> more clerelye. And I was answered in my resone that ȝyf god walde schewe me mare he shulde, botte me nedyd na light botte hym.[62]

As I discussed in the last section, it was a similar vision of the cross and events of the Passion while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem that caused Margery Kempe to begin the emotional outbursts that would plague her attempts to be seen as a representative of the *vita activa* in early fifteenth-century England. In both cases the visual context is just as important to understanding the intended signification as the linguistic sign—indeed, as Julian's attempt to explain what she saw above illustrates, a linguistically interpreted sign cannot explain what is meant when the sign is visual in nature. The sign must be approached contextually to be understood.

This context consists not only of the immediate linguistic or visual environment in which the sign finds itself, which Augustine (concerned with biblical exegesis) suggests is the way by which a sign should be understood,[63] but also of the conceptual framework in which the sign is received, as is seen in the roof boss and the sequence of images in the Queen Mary Psalter. This framework connects the sign to a cumulative or holistic notion of the saint as well as to the limitations of the material elements that make up the actualization of the sign in the immediate environment. These limitations can either be natural, such as the split wood in a carved roof timber in the Lady Chapel of Holy Trinity, Long Melford, or artificial, such as the whitewashing and subsequent loss of textual information in several places in the Lady Chapel, the apparently deliberate

[62] Julian, 225.
[63] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*. In Migne, comp. PL, vol. 34 col. 78-79.

defacement of carvings in the choir of St. Gregory's in Sudbury, and the removed heads of several figures in roof boss CNE5 in the cloisters of Norwich Cathedral.

Figure 2.6: A carved roof timber from the Lady Chapel, Holy Trinity, Long Melford.

The wood has split over time, and the whitewashing of the chapel during the reformation has eliminated the text of the book. In these images, Mary Magdalene is informing an assembly of apostles—represented by eleven figures lacking the aureola of sainthood (as is Mary Magdalene herself) in the case of the Bible Moralisée, but five figures, four of which possess the aureola, in the Queen Mary Psalter. She is speaking to the group in a visual representation of the moment she becomes the *apostola apostolorum* in both cases, but the body language represented when she does so is different in each case. In

the Bible Moralisée, she appears to be speaking excitedly, with her arms spread in gesticulation. Conversely, in the Queen Mary Psalter, wherein the saints already possess their aureolae, she is depicted as a preacher imparting knowledge, finger raised to make a point. In addition to the aureola, in the Psalter she also carries the alabastrum, the saintly attribute signifying who she is in her iconography, which she lacks in the Bible Moralisée. Instead, text indicating what the roundel signifies is to the left of it, implying that the image alone is not enough to explain what is going on. Furthermore, looking at the full context of each page (or, in the case of the Psalter, the page and the facing page) reveals that the particular image is associated with the text in the case of the Bible Moralisée, but in the case of the Queen Mary Psalter is separate from the text (and indeed, is part of a sequence beginning at 299v and ending at 302r which shows the major events of her *vita* as depicted in the *Legenda Aurea*).

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A  B 

Figure 2.7: Two examples of defacement: A: the removal of heads from God the Father, the Virgin Mary, and Christ from roof boss CNE5 in the Cloisters of Norwich Cathedral. The position of the remnants of the figures, the gender of the central figure, and the untouched dove representing the Holy Spirit show that this is a depiction of the coronation of the Virgin. B: the defacement of two faces in the choir of St. Gregory's, Sudbury.

In some cases, other contextual elements such as the position of the roof boss in relation to other items in the cloister allow the sign to still function. In others, such as the faces in the choir, the defacement destroys much of the symbolic function of the carvings. Augustine acknowledges the possibility of confusion, suggesting the use of other passages in scripture and a basic understanding of grammatical tropes to contextualize passages whose meaning is in doubt,[64] but this limits that context to written passages, which is problematic when considering the cultural or conceptual place of saints holistically.

Reading the saint without considering that holistic context from complete abstraction to concrete actualization is then just as problematic as reading the visual or textual portion of the depictions of Mary Magdalene above without the other associated element. Instead, Mary Magdalene—and indeed any saint—is a conglomeration of various significations, layered on top of each other, connected to other elements of religious and cultural practice, and requiring an extra level of analysis to help illuminate the particular relationship in question. It is not enough to read about Kempe's visions of the Passion, or how "su*m*tyme Seynt Mary Mawdelyn [spoke] to þe vndirstondyng of hir sowle, & enformyd hir how sche xulde louyn God,"[65] or how Julian saw the world as a hazelnut. Each of these events are tied to extralinguistic sources of meaning. For this reason Saussure's linguistically-centered semiotic (or indeed its medieval and classical antecedents) is not enough.

[64] Ibid., cols. 79-81.
[65] Kempe, 215.

A better theory of semiotics for this purpose is that of Charles Sanders Peirce. In Peirce's semiotic theory, he suggests that a sign is "anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former."[66] That is, a sign is composed of three parts—the representation of something (the Representamen), the restrictions placed on our understanding of that something (the Object), and the understanding that we gain from the connection between the two (the Interpretant). If one maps Saussure's semiotic onto this Peircian model, the Representamen would equate to the signifier and the Object to the signified. To put it in diagram form, then, the relationship among the three looks something like this:

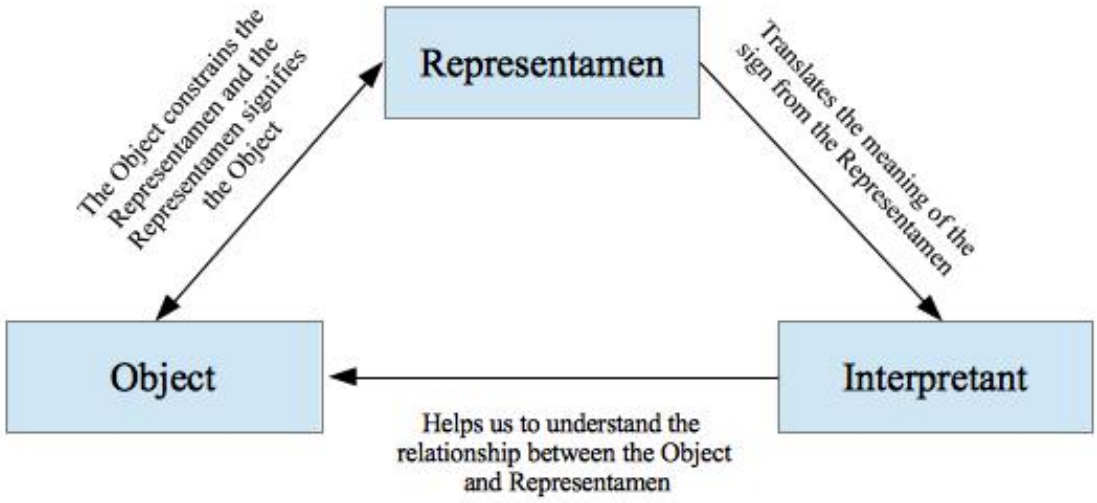

Figure 2.8: The triadic relationship of Peirce's semiotic. Note how the arrow between the Object and Representamen is reflective of the two arrows in Saussure's semiotic, implying a similar relationship, but that the addition of the Interpretant provides additional contextual understanding of the sign.

[66] Peirce, *Essential Peirce,* 478.

Peirce never completed a definitive explanation of his theory of signs; what we have are a number of works in progress and correspondence, published after his death, which deal with the relationship between the three categories in slightly different ways. All of them have the same triadic structure, but each of them treats the relationship between the elements slightly differently, and elements of each have utility for discussing the saint as a complex sign.

In the earliest account, Peirce believes that the Interpretant acts as a more developed version of the relationship between the Representamen and the Object. The chain of connections this generates is similar to the two planes Saussure mentions, but handled dynamically instead of statically, as each link in the chain is generated by the one that came before it. In this early account Peirce makes a connection between the words *homme* and *man* that is reminiscent of Saussure's *sheep*/*mouton*/*mutton* example. In describing the Interpretant, he states

> suppose we look out[sic] the word *homme* in a French dictionary; we shall find opposite to it the word *man*, which, so placed, represents *homme* as representing the same two-legged creature which *man* itself represents. By a further accumulation of instances, it would be found that every comparison requires, besides the related thing, the ground and the correlate, also a *mediating representation which represents the relate to be a representation of the same correlate which this mediating representation itself represents.* Such a mediating representation may be termed an *interpretant*, because it fulfills the office of an interpreter, who says that a foreigner says the same thing which he himself says.[67]

[67] Peirce, *Writings,* 53-54.

Peirce considers a ground "a pure abstraction" that, when referred to, "constitutes a *quality* or general attribute […] Reference to a ground cannot be prescinded from being, but being can be prescinded from it." Likewise, a correlate is the quality that is only understood "by means of its contrast with or similarity to another."[68] Rather than suggesting that the two linguistic environments are separate planes, Peirce is suggesting that in translating *homme* to *man* (or *apostola apostolorum* to *apostles apostlesse*) the Interpretant does the work of connecting whatever is expressed by the relationship between the two to our understanding. Moreover, the Interpretant defines exactly is being expressed by that relationship.

Thus, the Interpretant acts as a lens for the recipient of that sign, as the Interpretant of the Representatmen/Object dyad will be different for each individual. If one considers the example of linguistic translation, the choice of words that a translator might use could be different, depending on the individual translator's understanding of what is being expressed. The representation changes from individual to individual.

The visions of Julian are difficult to interpret in their written form because what she presents is only a portion of the whole. In the written form, Julian's text presents the Interpretant and either the Object or Representamen, but the crucial third piece to allow complete understanding is lacking. Take, for example, Julian's most famous vision, that of the object she likens to a hazelnut. In the short text, she recounts that

[68] Ibid.,53.

> he schewyd me a lytille thynge, the qwantyte of a haselle nutte, lyggande in the palme of my hande, *and* to my vundyrstandynge that, it was as rownde as any balle. I lokede þ*er* opo*n*n and thought: What maye this be? I was answered gen*er*aly thus: It is all that ys made. I marveylede how þat it might laste, for me thought it myght falle sodaynlye to naught for litille. And I was answered in myne vndyrstandynge: It lasts and eu*er* schalle, for god loves it; and so hath all thynge the beynge thorowe the love of god.[69]

The long text keeps much of the same text, but qualifies it: instead of simply looking at the object, she is looking at it "w*ith* the eye of my vnderstanding," and it "semide" to her to lie in the palm of her hand, rather than the more concrete assertion of the short text.[70] So upon reflection, Julian herself is qualifying what she saw, because words are not enough to articulate what she is trying to say. Additionally, consider that the hazelnut is not truly a hazelnut—that is a convenient shorthand that Julian is using and that we have picked up on in working with her text. Instead, it is something that is "the quantitie" of a hazelnut, so similar in size, and "rounde as a balle." God explicates that something, whatever it may be, to Julian, but that explication is transferred to us only imperfectly through the text. This means that every reader will have a different perception of what is actually meant when Julian refers to the hazelnut. For example, when I first read this passage, it sounded to me like it was a miniature representation of the world, but without knowing exactly what the object is—that is to say, without having both the visual and linguistic context—my initial thought is nothing but mere speculation. Moreover, that

[69] Julian, 212-213.
[70] Ibid., 299-300.

speculation on my part is informed by having actually seen representations of the Earth as seen from space, which provides an extra level of context that Julian would not have had available.

The ineffectiveness of linguistic signification for explaining the types of ideas that Julian is attempting to express can be further seen in her attempt to explain the significations of the hazelnut in the short and long texts. In the short text, she states that the hazelnut has three "partyes": that God made it, that God loves it, and that God keeps it. From there, she goes on to explain that, as one connected to God this matters to her as it is a representation of God as maker, God as lover, and God as keeper. Attempting to explain it further in the short text, she says that "I am substancyallye aned to hym, I may nevere have love, rest ne varray blysse; that is to saye that / I be so festenede to hym that thare be ryght nought that is made betwyxe my god *and* me. And wha schalle do this dede? Sothly hym selfe be his m*er*cye *and* his grace, for he has made me there to and blysfully restoryd."[71] The long text attempts to clarify this statement. Julian writes "for till I am substantially vnyted to him I may never haue full rest ne verie blisse; þ*at* is to say that I be so fastned to him that ther be right nought that is made betweene my god and me."[72] She then attempts to explain the rest of the vision: first, that the thought that it might fall to nothing represents the need to attain knowledge and to think well of everything that God has made, as to not do so is the cause of despair. Second, she indicates that God should be approached naked in spirit, with humility, since nothing

[71] Ibid., 213.
[72] Ibid., 299.

should be asked of God but what is of "worshippe to" him. To ask any less is to always want. Last, she claims that the goodness of God "fulfillith all his creatures and all his blessed works" and that "he is the endlesshead and he made vs only to him self and restored vs by his p*re*cious passion."[73] Since there is no visual or contextual cues to explain this vision, Julian is required to attempt to explicate it for us, and while the longer text does help clarify what is meant, there are still aspects of the signification of whatever this small object is that are open to interpretation, as readers lack the contextual cues available to Julian and must speculate or make their own assumptions, as I do when I see it as a miniature representation of the Earth from space.

Kempe, on the other hand, presents visions that are immediately understandable to the audience. When she states that she "went procession w*yth* oþ*er* pepil" and "saw in hir sowle owr Lady, Seynt Mary Mawdelyn & þe xij apostelys," we have the contextual cues from scripture and from such visual depictions as the Norwich roof bosses to understand who these people are and what they looked like to her. Furthermore, when she "be-held w*yth* hir gostly eye how owr <Lady> toke hir leue of hir blysful Sone, Crist Ih*es*u, how he kissed hir & alle hys apostelys & also hys trewe louer, Mary Mawdelyn," we have the aforementioned visual depictions as well as textual references in scripture, the *Northern* and *Southern Passions*, and such works as the *Mirror* to help flesh out our understanding of these representations. What readers receive will not precisely be what Kempe saw, but the text provides enough of a common set of signs that the information she wants to convey comes across. Both Julian and Margery's visions are written, but

[73] Ibid., 302-303.

they indicate different types of representation, and as such Peirce's description of representations will be useful to help illustrate why Kempe is easier to interpret than Julian.

Peirce and Representation

In Peirce's early account he defines three types of representations: Likenesses (later referred to as Icons), Indexes, and Symbols. These types are defined as follows:

> 1st. Those whose relation to their objects is a mere community in some quality, and these representations may be termed *Likenesses.*
> 2d. Those whose relation to their objects consists in a correspondence in fact, and these may be termed *Indices* or *Signs*.
> 3d. Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an imputed character, which are the same as *general signs*, and these may be termed *Symbols*.[74]

In terms of the examples I gave above, Julian's description of the hazelnut in comparison to the object she actually beheld is an example of a Likeness. She is attempting to use the size of a hazelnut to depict what exactly she means by the fragility of the entirety of being in comparison to the enormity of God. Her explication of the hazelnut and the various things it represents are examples of a Symbol, as Peirce has it—the three parts that she speaks of are the imputed characteristics of creation as it should be, rather than a literal representation or attempt to metaphorize the object. Keep in mind, though, that to Julian's mind the hazelnut *is* the world, rather than a representation of it, and in that way

[74] Peirce, *Writings,* 56.

the fragility and inability of the world to contain the enormity of man and God is also an Index or Sign.

In comparison, Kempe's vision deals with representations of biblical figures, and as such is really only a series of Signs, lacking the attachment to quality or character that Peirce suggests is required for the other two types of representation. Everything we understand about the saints, Christ, and the Virgin Mary comes from outside contextual information, rather than the representations that Kempe describes. Indeed, her emotional response is not because of any particular insight gained through the vision as she sees it, but because of the environmental context in which she sees the visions—her connection of the visions to the factual events of salvation history. Where there is meaning in Julian's vision as she sees it, and the interpretation of the vision is to tease out that meaning, for Kempe the meaning is external to her vision and the vision is simply a triggering mechanism. For this reason, Kempe's visions are more understandable to us, but also less likely to be able to contribute to the complex understanding of Mary Magdalene as a multivalent representation.

While Mary Magdalene serves as part of the set of limitations that Kempe places on the signification of her visions, she is rarely the subject of those significations. Instead, Kempe uses her as a means by which to engage in an act of self-resignification.[75] The comparison made in the *Book* between Mary Magdalene and Margery Kempe is about Kempe attempting to change her role in society and using

[75] Another moment of resignification interesting because it is based on silence, rather than speech, occurs when Kempe does not complete her spiritual marriage to God the Father, remaining silent and returning to contemplation on the Son. See Partner, 413-415.

Mary Magdalene as an exemplar to justify that role, rather than about changing the understanding of Mary Magalene. The troubles she runs into when dealing with others are not because she encourages a heterodox viewpoint involving the eucharist, Mary Magdalene, or Christ. Instead, it is because Kempe's attempt at resignfiication, which utilizes Mary Magdalene as one of its supports, is rejected because she engages in the *vita activa* during a time when women with a religious calling are to admire and emulate silence rather than speech. Additionally, she lacks the sort of institutional cachet that Julian and Love possess due to their recognized positions within the ecclesiastical order, which grant legitimacy and cover to the words chosen. In exchange for this, any resignification on their parts is restricted to ways that do not overtly show the kind of social and religious issues brought up by a woman who claims not to preach, but only does so based on a technicality. When dealing with her visions in the *Book,* Kempe receives the textual and visual signs around her, largely accepts the orthodox collections of meaning attached to them, and then attempts to use those orthodox meanings in a way that she believes will aid in her self-resignification. She does not change the signification of Mary Magdalene in any way that shifts the understanding of the saint.

Mary Magdalene as a Symbol

A shift in understanding of the saint requires that she be more than a literal representation in either appearance or quality. Instead, Mary Magdalene's conceptualization as a symbol, as Peirce describes it, will hold the key to her evolution as a sign. Peirce's early understanding of the relationship between the parts of a sign, as I have outlined it here, allows for the concept of infinite semiosis, which I believe to be

both the primary accretive process by which Mary Magdalene is to be understood as a multi-layered sign when she is referenced and the means by which ideas about the saint evolve over the course of time.

Infinite semiosis, as Peirce describes it, means that "anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum*."[76] Sign here being taken to be equivalent to Representamen, it becomes a part of a new triad, and the Interpretant of that triad is itself a more fully developed version of that original sign.

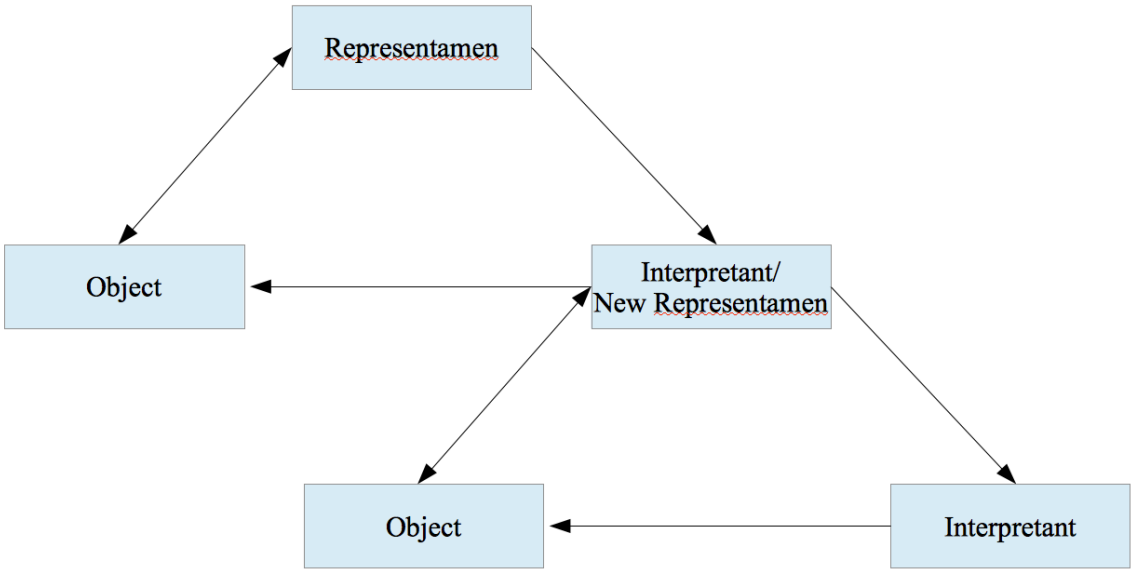

Figure 2.9: Infinite Semiosis. The Interpretant of the first sign becomes the Representamen of the next sign in the chain.

[76] Peirce, *Papers*, vol. 2, 169.

The major problem with the concept of a chain of signs is that when it ends, there is no further Interpretant generated. Once that occurs, the result cannot be considered a sign anymore. Peirce suggests as much when he states that "if the series of successive interpretants comes to an end, the sign is thereby rendered imperfect, at least."[77] However, even if this ending were to occur, it is only possible if we assume that ideas exist in a closed system. Since ideas continue to evolve over time, the system is never truly closed and ideas regarding the sign—or in this case, the saint—continue to evolve as well.

Love's *Mirror* provides an example of this when he reinterprets the *Meditaciones* to serve the ends of a post-*Constitutions* fifteenth century. In chapter XXXIV of the *Mirror*—which is a translation of the *Meditaciones* chapter LXVI, entitled "De resuscitacione Lazari" ["of Lazarus' resurrection"]—Love expands significantly on the events that Johannis notes, themselves taken from John 11. In his version, Johannis gives a faithful accounting of the biblical events, noting only that "presens miraculum ualde celebre multumque solemne cum deuocione meditandum occurrit" ["the present miracle is very famous and met with solemn devotion"] and admonishing the audience to

> ideo sic te attentam exhibeas ac si presens esses his que dicta hie et facta fuerunt et libenter conuerseris non solum cum Domino Iesu et discipulis eius, sed eciam cum ista benedicta familia sic Domino deuota et a Domino dilecta, scilicet Lazaro, Martha et Maria.[78]

[77] Ibid., 169-170.
[78] Johannis, 228-229.

> [be as attentive as though you had been present for what is said here. And be glad to converse not only with the Lord Jesus and his disciples, but also with the blessed family so devoted to and beloved by the Lord, namely Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.]

In the translation, however, Love connects the events to the other two bodies raised by Christ and more importantly to the words of Saint Augustine. His opening includes not just "þe souereyn miracle itself, bot also […] many notable þinges þat befelle in þat myracle & diuerse misteries, þe which seyne Austyn clergialy treteþ."[79] First connecting the raisings of the daughter of the master of the temple and the widow's son to that of Lazarus through that reference to Saint Augustine's sermons, he then discusses the raising of Lazarus by framing the events for his audience—reminding them of how Christ was challenged at the temple by Jews that wished to stone him, then how he "ȝive ensaumple of pacience" by removing himself from Jerusalem. After adding this extraneous material, Love then explains the scriptural references in John 11, with reference to Augustine throughout. Furthermore, he makes his opposition to Lollardy clear, stating that Augustine is

> a sufficient auctoritie aȝeynus hem þat repreuene confession ordeynet by holi chirch, & also þe assoylyng of curates, seying falsly þat it is ynowh generaly to eurey man, fort shryue him onely in his hert, to godde. And þat prestes or curates of holi chirch haue no more powere to assoile of synnes, þan anoyþer comene man, bot þat god alony assoileþ, & none oþere in his name.[80]

[79] Love, 125.
[80] Love, 135.

This paragraph has no direct connection to the events of John 11 as outlined in Johannis, a digression that Love acknowledges in the opening of the next paragraph, stating that he will be "nowe leuyng þees fals opiniones" and instead return to "þe ende of oure forseid processe": the actual story of the raising of Lazarus as recounted in scripture with further reference to Augustine.

The changes between Johannis and Love's version show that the initial idea—the explication of John 11 that Johannis recounts in the *Mirror*—serves as the initial Representamen of his first triad, itself the Interpretant of Johannis' triad. Much like in his discussion of the active and contemplative lives, however, Love's understanding of the sign involves not only the Representamen based on Johannis' Interpretant, but also a different Object. The set of constraints he operates under contains both Augustine and Arundel, where Johannis' did not. Because of this, the Interpretant of his understanding of the sign representing the raising of Lazarus must contain some reference to orthodoxy.

Admittedly, this is an expansion of Peirce's original idea—generally speaking, his intent is that infinite semiosis occurs within a single individual's mind. In that model, only the output is available to the audience. This is similar to the idea of a technological black box: something that receives input and generates output, but whose operations are opaque to the viewer. What I am suggesting here is that the chain of infinite semiosis does not operate only in a single mind, but instead that the output of that black box can

itself become the input of a new semiotic chain, and as such the chain of infinite semiosis operates between individuals as well as within each individual's mind.

The chain of infinite semiosis, when understood as a mechanism that transfers ideas, changes multiple aspects of the sign, showing that the earlier discussion of Mary Magdalene, Love's *Mirror*, and the visions of Kempe and Julian has been incomplete. That discussion has occurred primarily in terms of single attributes, rather than as a result of the collective set of concepts surrounding the idea of the saint. This is because Saussure, Augustine, and the earlier form of Peirce's semiotic theory do not deal easily with anything but a single definition of the sign that is either linguistically based or that reduces to a general set of ideas about symbols. This changes somewhat in his intermediate, best-developed ideas about semiotics, which have the most utility in discussing Mary Magdalene as a sign.

At this intermediate stage, Peirce defines the Representamen, the Object, and the Interpretant based on qualities, existential facts, or conventions and laws. These definitions, in turn, help to delineate many more types of sign than the three given in the earlier account, since each gradation of meaning for the three terms yields a slightly different type of sign. In terms of the semiotic packet, this means that anything to be signified can, depending on the particular qualities emphasized, fall into a number of the categories in which Peirce places the various combinations.[81] For example, in looking at depictions of the *noli me tangere* scene in John 20:17, we see a number of similarities

[81] Peirce, *Papers*, vol. 2, 146-150.

and differences that will help to illustrate how different emphases make a difference in how the item is received.

While I have already treated Love's approach to the *noli me tangere* as a translation of Johannis, the two versions have not been considered as signs in and of themselves. Moreover, Margery Kempe provides an example of how the scene was used within her own visionary practice, and as such a contemporary interpretation of the sign. As I discussed previously, Johannis' explication of the scripture included the thought that Christ's intent in denying Mary Magdalene's touch was to turn her mind to the things of heaven, rather than the things of Earth. His physical existence as a sign has not changed, nor has his corporal existence as such at this point. What has changed is the way that Christ wishes Mary Magdalene to interpret the relationship between these facts of his existence. Rather than considering him corporeally and interacting with him accordingly, Christ wishes her to consider him as the second part of the Trinity. He emphasizes the quality of his existence, rather than the fact of his existence. Johannis' explanation is an attempt to lead the audience to similar conclusions.

When Love translates this section and interpolates his explanation of the scriptural material, he is first accepting the sign as Johannis explains it. However, he goes further, making direct suggestions to the audience as to how they are to interpret the scripture. This shifts what Johannis is attempting to say—that Christ wished Mary Magdalene to consider his signification in qualitative, rather than existential terms—and adds an extra dimension of ecclesiastical convention and law onto it.

Both of these interpretations of the sign are primarily textually based. They are presenting the events as a narrative, and while Johannis' idea of what Christ is to Mary Magdalene is less muddled by interpolated scriptural explication than Love's, it is not as pure as direct visionary experience. Kempe, on the other hand, experiences these events—as with many of her visions—as though she were there. Her explanation of events follow John until the point where Christ tells Mary Magdalene to "towche me not." At that point, Kempe injects her personal interpretation of events into the symbolic meaning of the moment, stating that "þe creatur thowt þat Mary Mawdelyn seyd to owr Lord 'A, Lord, I se well ȝe wil not þa*t* I be so homly w*yth* ȝow as I haue ben a-forn.'" This is not that much different than Johannis or Love's interpretations of events, except where they have the understanding made internally Kempe puts the words into Mary Magdalene's mouth. Likewise, she has Christ's response be spoken rather than internally understood. Finally, she notes that "þe creatur thowt þa*t* Mary went forth w*yth* gret joy, & þa*t* was gret m*er*ueyl to hir þa*t* Mary enioyed, for, ȝyf owr Lord had seyd to hir as he dede to Mary, hir thowt sche cowed neu*yr* a ben mery."[82]

Without the explication that Love includes, Kempe's interpretation of the *noli me tangere* could be considered to be not about the shift in Mary Magdalene's understanding of Christ, but about how Mary Magdalene's experience relates to that of Kempe. Furthermore, Kempe's understanding of scriptural events remains grounded in her visionary connection to the events of salvation history rather than to the interpretation of them, as evidenced by the fact that she "had so gret swem & heuynes in

[82] Kempe, 197.

þ*a*t worde þ*a*t eu*yr* whan she herd it in any s*er*mown, as she dede many tymys, sche wept, sorwyd, & cryid as sche xulde a deyd for lofe & desir þ*a*t sche had to ben w*yth* owr Lord."[83]

Note that the more qualitative interpretations of Love and Johannis never really disappear entirely, even when dealing with a more physical existential connection to the sign such as that of Kempe. Different elements of the sign have different representations to the audience, as can be seen both from the textual depictions described above and visual representations of the *noli me tangere* in architecture and manuscript decoration. As can be seen in figure 2.10 the basic elements—the kneeling or subservient Magdalene and the admonishing Christ—remain the same, but the ancillary elements such as the method of production, the choice to include a shovel to indicate Christ's appearance as a gardener, the colors chosen, and the actual positioning and body language of the two figures in relation to each other are slightly different. Furthermore, note that the depiction of Mary in Ashmolean WA1863.1913 has unbound hair and that her alabastrum is next to her. This is very much in keeping with the version of the depiction of Mary Magdalene shown in the roof boss, and in the way that the roof boss includes both the alabastrum and her unbound hair in its depiction of the scene.

[83] Ibid.

Figure 2.10: Four examples of the *noli me tangere*. A: BL MS Douce 38 fol. 119v. B: Ashmolean WA1863.1913. C: Norwich Cathedral NM6. D: BL Royal B VII fol 300v.

The figure of the kneeling Mary in the *noli me tangere,* as a visual representation of the biblical scene, uses conventional representations of Mary Magdalene and Christ to indicate who the figures are, it is constrained by qualitative features, and furthermore

uses qualitative elements to assist in the signification. The individual images' elements are constrained by the qualitative features of the individual image, and those qualitative elements assist in the signification. Thus, both in text and art a sign of the saint can be interpreted in multiple ways, depending on how the reader or viewer understands what is perceived.

Kempe's description of the events of the *noli me tangere* shows how just such an interpretation operates in opposition to the more sophisticated interpretations of Johannis and Love. These multiple understandings of how the reader or viewer interprets the sign are further problematized by the changes Peirce makes in his final account, where he makes a division of the Interpretant and the Object. The reason for this division is that the Object and Interpretant change as they move from the start of the chain, through the intermediate stages, to the ending. While this concept makes sense when thinking iteratively, as I have laid it out thus far, Peirce intends for this division to occur during the process of signification on a cognitive level, while the ideas are still functioning within the black box between the initial reception of the sign and the final development of the individual understanding.

Because I want to consider the sign as it travels between individuals, rather than within an individual's particular understanding, Peirce's division of the Object is not particularly useful for this project. His division of the Interpretant, however, will be useful to consider as Mary Magdalene's signification changes throughout the fifteenth century. Peirce states that the Dynamic Interpretant "is whatever interpretation any mind

actually makes of a sign,"[84] and then goes on to suggest that the "Final Interpretant does not consist in the way in which any mind does act but in the way in which every mind would act."[85] Since there is no single reductive sign that signifies everything that Mary Magdalene represents, and since her signification is still changing, I believe it is more useful to utilize Peirce's idea of the Immediate Interpretant.[86] Rather than a final understanding of the sign, this is the set of mental "rules" we bring to bear when first dealing with it. Working with this division of the Interpretant between our initial, immediate reaction and the more thoughtful, dynamic consideration of the sign automatically allows for the influence of the reader or viewer's social, political, economic, and educational environment in their interpretation of the sign, and so will have more utility analyzing Mary Magdalene over a period of time.

The analysis of Mary Magdalene at particular points in that period would look something like this: on reading or viewing the particular representation of the saint, it is mentally broken down into a loose collection of signs, based on the set of mental constraints that serve as the Dynamic Interpretant in each case. While the receiver is alive, the shifting set of constraints informs thinking about the saint, represented by the Immediate Interpretant.At this point, thought about the sign is essentially a closed system, or the black box I mentioned above: the receiver continues to think about the saint until either a conclusion is reached—in which case that conclusion becomes the

[84] Peirce, *Papers*, vol. 8, 212.
[85] Ibid., 213.
[86] Consider, for example, the new interest in her based on the popular thriller *The Divinci Code* and what the success of that book may do to legitimize the alternate view of her relationship with Christ first laid out in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail.*

Final Interpretant, implying cognitive stagnation or death on the part of the receiver, or a particular interpretation of the saint is thrown out as an Immediate Interpretant and received by others as a new Dynamic Interpretant. Such a cognitive engine develops different interpretations of the saint over time, constrained by the Objects of the particular moment, whenever the receiver considers her. When discussing the saint as a sign it is enough to keep in mind that this is the interpretation of the moment. My descriptions of the processes of developing ideas about the saint in Kempe, Love, and Johannis are intended then to serve as examples of a general approach to understanding the sign.

Moreover, since a perfect representation in either text or art is an impossibility, the fact that representations are imperfect means that a certain amount of information is lost every time the receiver shares their ideas with another. In addition to this, the person receiving those ideas begins the process over again with a different Object involved in the process of analysis, since that person's experience is mediated by different sets of constraints than those initially imposed. It is this process of constantly changing internal cogitation with periodic imperfect transfers of knowledge that allows for ideas regarding the saint to shift over time.

The Network

Up to this point, I have spoken primarily of how the saint operates as a sign and the mechanisms by which that sign enters the conception of a reader or viewer. What I have not touched on is how the constraints on that sign operate, and what is meant by imperfect reproduction. While not perfect for my purposes, Actor-Network Theory will

help to explain this process and the mechanisms of transference. As John Law envisions it,

> Actor network theory is a ruthless application of *semiotics*. It tells that entities take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities. In this scheme of things entities have no inherent qualities: essentialist divisions are thrown on the bonfire of the dualisms. […] it is not, in this semiotic world-view, that there are no divisions. It is rather that such divisions or distinctions are understood as effects or outcomes. They are not given in the order of things.[87]

This emphasis Law places on effects or outcomes, rather than essentialist divisions, means that what we see as singular actors are really the action of "patterned networks of diverse (not simply human) materials."[88] To explain this, he begins from the standpoint of sociology of science, a field in which "knowledge is a social product rather than something generated by through [sic] the operation of a privileged scientific method."[89] Knowledge, in this case, is not knowledge as we generally conceive of it, as a purely abstract set of concepts, facts, and intuitions. Rather, knowledge is embodied in material forms, as the product of work wherein the materials used to produce that knowledge are organized into a network that overcomes the natural desire of these individual pieces to "make off on their own."[90] This network extends out into the world and becomes the means of mediation between the researcher and the world at large. In effect, the researcher is not just the single individual but a network that mediates the world's input

[87] John Law, "After ANT," 3.
[88] --, "Notes," 380.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

and of which the researcher is only one small piece. In terms of the saint as a sign, what is intended in expressing that sign to the world is of no matter—meaning instead depends on how that sign is received by its intended audience, mediated by their own network of associated materials.

As an example of this, consider the image of the two facing pages of the Queen Mary Psalter from earlier:

Figure 2.11: The composited image from the British Library's website, made to appear like the codex.

The image as presented here looks as though it is two facing pages of the physical codex book. However, the British Library presents the two pages thus when you look at it in a web browser:

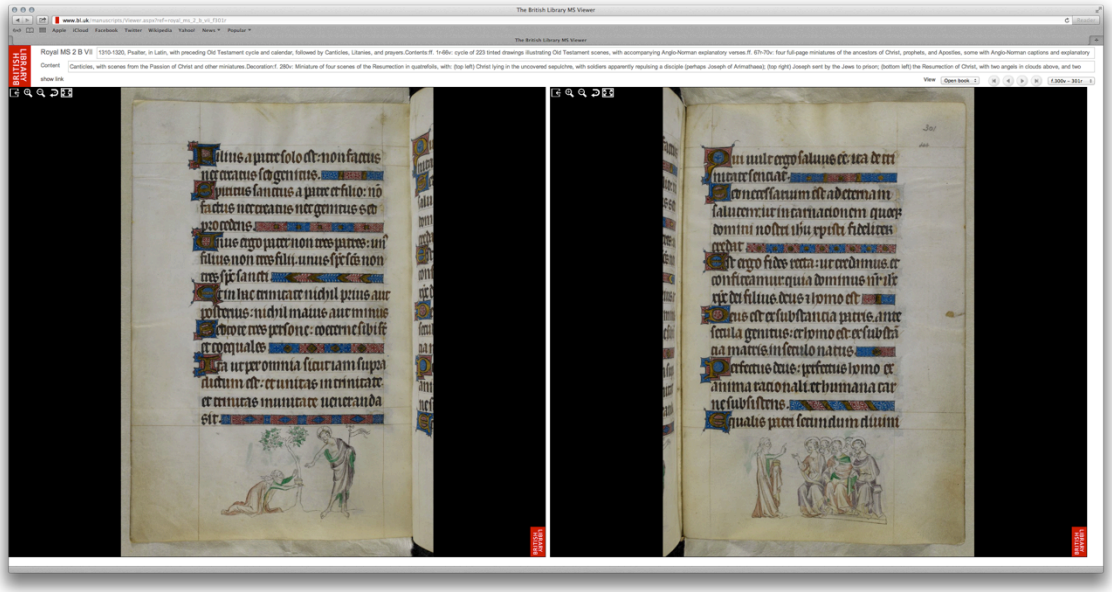

Figure 2.12: Royal MS 2 B VII, Fol. 300v-301r as pictured in the British Library's manuscript viewer.

In order to make the pages appear as though they were in the codex book, I am required to first capture each page as a separate image file, then place the image files next to each other in order to produce the effect of the open codex book. It requires my computer, a web browser, a piece of graphics software, and the ability of my computer to take an image and insert it into the document I am working on. This does not even take into account the network of camera equipment, servers, and skilled workers that were necessary to digitize the successive pages in the first place. Or, for that matter, the political network that resulted in the acquisition of the manuscript by Queen Mary, thus

allowing for its eventual deposit in the British Library from the royal household, the economic network that allowed for the acquisition of the text, or in networks of production and expression in the early fourteenth century that went into the development of the original psalter.

The process of how it got to the page serves as the black box mentioned earlier. Input—in this case, the desire to show Mary Magdalene as *Apoatola Apostolorum* in context as figure 2.4 B—generates the image as output, and the intermediary steps are invisible. Similarly, the complexities of a seemingly simple system—like, for example, the human body—are generally concealed until they have to be recognized because a problem has developed. This recognition is what John Law refers to as punctualization. He states that

> the appearance of unity, and the disappearance of network, has to do with simplification. The argument runs like this. All phenomena are the effect or the product of heterogeneous networks. But in practice we do not cope with endless network ramification. Indeed, much of the time we are not even in a position to detect network complexities. So what is happening? The answer is that if a network acts as a single block, then it disappears, to be replaced by the action itself and the seemingly simple author of that action.[91]

Looking at the Queen Mary Psalter example, the first image makes the network involved in getting the image onto the page disappear by presenting the image in as close a manner as possible to the original pages. The second image forces one to be aware of the

[91] Law, "Notes," 385.

systems that have digitized the work, and for this reason the network becomes visible again. This breakdown of the filters that present a network as a single block does not have to be visual, of course. The pages shown, as mentioned earlier, are part of a sequence from fol. 299v-301r that depict the life of Mary Magdalene in the *Legenda Aurea.* Looking at the descriptions of the events in the bibliographical material provided regarding the bas-de-page images only provides mention of Mary Magdalene as specifically related to the picture in two places: 300r and 300v. This forces me as a reader who is aware of the legendary history of the saint to question the accuracy of the description and in turn makes me think about the networks that produced that explanation. What had been invisible was made visible by my having to acknowledge and engage with, rather than simply accept, it.

A similar operation is at work in the development of Mary Magdalene between Love and Johannis. When approached as the text without its apparatus (such as, for example, in the sections of the *Mirror* that circulated independent of the full text as the *Privity of the Passion*), we do not see the actual work of translation and interpretation that the *Meditaciones* undergoes in becoming the *Mirror*. Instead, it serves as a cultural artifact divorced of the surrounding political, economic, and social contexts and the reader's interpretation of it is based only on the artifact as output rather than as the result of the interaction between the two networks.

Love himself is aware of how his circumstances control the interpretation of his translation. As he notes in the Proem,

> boþe men & women & euery Age & euery dignite of this worlde is stirid to hope of euery lasting life. Ande for þis hope & to þis entent also bene wryten diuerse bokes & trettes of devoute men not onlich to clerkes in latyne, but also in Englyshe to lewde men & women and hem þat bene of simple vndirstondyng."[92]

Furthermore, he remarks that Bonaventure (in fact Johannis, as the Pseudo-Bonaventure) wrote the *Meditaciones* to "a religiouse woman in latyne" but that his intent is the "edifying to simple creatures þe whiche as childryn hauen need to be fedde with mylke of lyȝte doctrine & not with sadde mete of grete clargye of hye contemplacion." Even here, though, Love's translation functions as a black box, since (as Sargeant notes in her introduction)[93] what he is doing is paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 3:1-3:

> Et ego, fratres, non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritualibus, sed quasi carnalibus. Tamquam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam: nondum enim poteratis: sed nec nunc quidem potestis: adhuc enim carnales estis. Cum enim sit inter vos zelus, et contentio: nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis?
>
> [And so, brothers, I was not able to talk to you as spiritual people; I had to talk to you as people still living in your natural inclinations, still infants in Christ; I fed you with milk and not solid food, for you were not yet able to take it—and even now, you are still not able to, for you are still living by your natural inclinations. As long as there are jealous and rivalry among you, that surely means that you are still living by merely human principles.][94]

[92] Love, 10.
[93] Johannis, xxx-xxxi.
[94] Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

Thus, no text—even one in which the author makes an attempt to explain his motivations as Love does—should be taken at face value. Instead, one must consider the network within which the author operates—the physical factors of the work's composition, its influences, and its reception. The utility of ANT for this project, then, lies with the concept of networks that include the material as a mediating force, allowing for the process of translation between the sign and the individual at the center of that network. Those networks, in turn, connect to each other in larger and larger ways until the entirety of society is one large network within which semiotic packets move. This means that the process of cognition has a firm material element that should be addressed, as I have done here and will do throughout this dissertation.

The inclusion of the phrase "apostles Apostelesse" by Love in his attempt to explicate the *Mirror* for the laity is a conscious action, albeit one that is carefully controlled by his use of scripture in order to make sure that Mary Magdalene does not move beyond her carefully constrained role. However, by detaching Mary Magdalene from the Latinate realm of "hye contemplacion" and introducing her to the laity in terms that they could understand, Love presents an alternate path for the signification of the saint than that represented by *apostola apostolorum.* As we will see in the next chapter, this path would take on specifically political and English contexts.

CHAPTER III

DEFINING THE *APOSTELSSE*

In the last chapter, I discussed the development of the conflated figure of Mary Magdalene that came down into the fifteenth century from the twelfth, and the introduction of the phrase *apostles apostlesse* as a translation of the Latin *apostola apostolorum* in Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*. The phrase as it attaches to the saint was first approached as a linguistic, then a visual sign, using the semiotic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce in the development of what I call the semiotic packet—the multivalent set of signs that surround the saint and which interact with and are mediated by the political, social, religious, and economic networks during the course of the fifteenth century. While developing the idea of the packet, I described how Mary Magdalene functioned as a sign in the *Mirror,* its source—Johannis de Caulibus' *Meditaciones Vitae Christi*—and two works contemporary to the *Mirror*: Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* and *The Book of Margery Kempe.* By comparing these texts, I showed how the semiotic packet operated in three different environments where the saint is evoked: the officially sanctioned translation in the case of the *Meditaciones*; the accepted, implicitly sanctioned, carefully articulated, but possibly heterodox spirituality in the *Revelations*; and the more mainstream, but unsanctioned and at times problematic spirituality of the *Book*.

I have primarily looked either at a group of items or a particular text as an isolated element—a single instantiation of the semiotic packet that added to the mix of thoughts about Mary Magdalene in the early fifteenth century. I have also presented mainly the religious aspects of that packet, as these were the dominant aspects in the development of the saint at the time of the introduction of the phrase into English. Even in the case of Margery Kempe, where I discussed her accusation and trial for Lollardy, I considered how her expression of piety broke social convention, rather than considering how the saint fully participated in the non-religious life of East Anglia.

I will use this chapter, then, primarily to examine a single work: Osbern Bokenham's *vita* of Mary Magdalene contained in BL MS Arundel 327[95] (his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*) and approach how it treats the saint not only from the religious standpoint, but also from the social, political and economic context of mid-fifteenth century England just prior to the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses. While many of the lives contained in the *Legendys* have social and economic contexts, the way that Mary Magalene's *vita* is divided makes it especially useful to examine from a political standpoint as well.

Bokenham's *vita* of Mary Magdalene is divided into three parts: a "prolocutorye," a "prologe", and the "lyf" itself. With this structure Bokenham expands upon the model of Jacobus de Voragine, who in his *Legenda Aurea* prefaces the *vita* of Mary Magdalene with a prologue explaining the meaning of the saint's name. This

[95] There has been a recent discovery of a second version of the Mary Magdalene *vita*, contained within a translation of the *Legenda Aurea* in the library of Abbotsford House. See Horobin, "Manuscript .". All references will be taken from Arundel 327, but I will include the appropriate lines from the Abbotsford manuscript as a footnote (under the abbreviation AL) for the sake of comparison.

pattern—prologue, then *vita*—is reflected in several of the other lives in the *Legendys* as well as in both prose and verse lives contained in the Abbotsford House *Legenda Aurea.*[96] The earlier work serves as a hypotext, providing a structure Bokenham uses in his version. However, Jacobus' *vita* of Mary Magdalene in the *Legenda* is in Latin prose, while Bokenham is writing in three different types of Middle English verse. Thus, Jacobus provides the overarching form of the piece, while the language and transition to verse are Bokenham's interpretation of Jacobus' narrative, mediated by his own linguistic, religious, and poetic experience. Moreover, for the *vita* of Mary Magdalene in Arundel 327 Bokenham adds a third section, the "prolocutorye," which explains the circumstances of his commission to write the *Lyf.*[97] It is in this section that the word *apostelesse* appears in the traditional "apostle of the apostles" formula, placed into the mouth of Isobel Bouchier:

> 'I haue,' q*uod* she, 'of pure affeccyoun
> Ful longe tym had a synguler deuocyoun
> To þat holy wu*m*man, wych, as I gesse,
> Is clepyd of apostyls þe apostyllesse ;
> Blessyd Mary mawdelyn y mene.[98]

[96] Horobin notes that seventeen of the items in the Abbotsford *Legenda* are in verse (Saints Barbara, Lucy, Paul, Agnes, Vincent, Agatha, Dorothy, Appolonia, Mary Egyptian, Ambrose, Audrey, Margaret, Mary Magdalene, Christina, Faith, the 11,000 virgins, and Saint Winifred) and that nine of the items (Saints Lucy, Agnes, Agatha, Dorothy, Margaret, Mary Magdalene, Christina, Faith, and the 11,000 virgins) also appear in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*. In every case except for that of Saint Lucy, an item that has a prologue in the *Legendys* also has one in the Abbotsford *Legenda*. In the case of Saint Lucy, it is likely that the prologue is on a leaf that has become disconnected from the manuscript and subsequently lost.
[97] This prolocutory section does not appear in the Abbotsford *Legenda*.
[98] Bokenham, 5065-5069.

In addition to Bokenham's decision to move *apostelesse* to this new prolocutory section rather than the position analogous to the junction between scriptural and legendary material in Jacobus' version of the *vita,* the word appears a second time at the very end of the "lyf" portion of the work as a referent to Mary Magdalene outside of the *apostola apostolorum* formula, but connected to her own burial and translation.[99] This dual shift—the mention of the traditional formula in this new prolocutory section and the inclusion of the word *apostelesse* in the "lyf" without the limiting context of the phrase "apostle of the apostles"[100] —broadens the connotative range of the word *apostelesse* from the ways in which it was used in the early fifteenth century by Love.

Bokenham is alone among the contemporary translations of the *Legenda* in completely shifting the location of the phrase when contextualizing it and removing the genitive condition "of the apostles." *La legende dorée* is a faithful translation of the Latin, ("qui ne quitta pas le sépulcre quand les disciples se retirèrent; ce fut à elle la première que J.-C. apparut lors de sa résurrection, et il la fit l'apôtre des apôtres,"[101]) while the *Gilte Legende* removes the disciples entirely, rendering the phrase as "she that […] parted not fro the sepulcre, to whom Ihesu Crist appered furst whan he arose from dethe to lyff, and she was *felawe to* the aposteles" [emphasis mine].[102] Caxton's 1483 edition of the *Legenda* changes it to "[she] wold not departe fro the monumente whan

[99] Bokenham, 6293, 6301.
[100] Jacobus, 32. The SISMEL text preserves the manuscript line numbers, and as such citations will be to the line number rather than page. The Latin statement that introduces the concept in Jacobus, which he takes from Ambrose, is "que a monumento discipulis recedentibus non recessit, cui Christus resurgens primo apparuit et apostolorum apostolam fecit." ["[She is the one] who, when the disciples left the tomb, did not go away, to whom the risen Christ first appeared, making her an apostle to the apostles"]
[101] Jean de Vignay, 245.
[102] Hamer, 470.

hys descyples departed / To whom Ihesu cryst appyered first after his resurectione / *and was felawe to the appostlys*, and made of our Lord apostolesse of the apostles" [emphasis mine].[103]

As mentioned in the last chapter, aspects of word choice can be indicative of tensions present in the particular network in which the idea represented by that word is travelling. In the case of Mary Magdalene in these two translations, "felawe" implies a level of equality with the apostles.[104] However, unlike the use of "felawe" elsewhere, the addition of the qualifying phrase "to the apostles" in both the *Gilte Legende* and the Caxton translation suggests that she is not of the same class. When the male apostles and disciples are mentioned as "fellows," this implied hierarchy is nonexistant. Since "felawe" can also have connotations of an inferior position,[105] and "to" is used rather than "of," this implied hierarchy is reinforced by the differing prepositions.[106] Caxton, rendering his version of the *Legenda* in the latter portion of the fifteenth century, appears to be attempting to split the difference by not only using the phrase "felawe to the appostlys" but also "made of our Lord apostelesse of the apostles." The fact he felt the need to include both, and to qualify "apostlesse of the apostles" with "made of our Lord" suggests that there is a difference in how the saint is understood by Caxton and Bokenham's audiences, as well as a tension regarding how she is to be interpreted in

[103] Caxton, 1483, fol. ccxvi v.; Caxton, 1487, fol. ccxvi v.; Caxton, 1493, fol. clxxxv r.; Caxton, 1498, fol. clxxvii v.; Caxton, 1527, fol. clxviii r. The wording is carried through (with minor orthographic changes) Caxton's 1487 edition and Wynkyn de Worde's 1493, 1498, and 1527 editions.
[104] *Middle English Dictionary* (hereafter MED). "Fellow." Accessed 02-04-2013. Definition 8a, directly referencing the apostles and disciples, is particularly of interest here.
[105] Ibid., 5.
[106] *MED*. "To" 4b. Accessed 02-04-2012; "Of" 6, 13. Accessed 02-04-2012.

comparison to the apostles that is absent in Bokenham. Moreover, this construction makes it clear that "fellow to" is an intentional signification. It places Mary Magdalene in a different category: that of a companion to the apostles, with a single apostolic moment limited by the genitive construction "of the apostles," rather than a "real" apostle in her own right.

The history of the word *apostlesse* at its initial introduction also reinforces the idea that these choices are due to anxieties regarding the saint. *Apostelesse*, as mentioned last chapter, was introduced into English with Love's *Mirror*, which was submitted to Bishop Arundel in 1410. As Arundel "commendauit & approbauit, necnon & auctoritate sua metropolitica, vt pote catholicum," ["commended and approvied it, and indeed decreed and commanded by his metropolitian authority that it be published universally,"] it is fair to assume that the translator of the *Gilte Legende,* who in at least one text states that the date of his translation is 1438, would have had access to the *Mirror* and its new word to translate "apôtre" into English at the time of his translation of *La legende dorée.* [107] A conscious choice on the part of the author of the *Gilte Legende* to avoid the word *apostelesse* and to use the word "felawe" when referring to Mary Magdalene suggests a backlash against seeing her as a fully-fledged apostle, rather than the carefully constrained apostle to the apostles of the twelfth century. Furthermore, Caxton's carefully nuanced description of Mary Magdalene as both "felawe" and "apostolesse" attempts to adjust to multiple views regarding Mary Magdalene, no doubt

[107] Love, 7. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 372 fol. 163r. It should be noted, however, that a study of the witnesses of the work shows a division prior to the production of this manuscript. See Hamer, xi-xii for further information regarding the extant manuscripts and their relationship to each other.

in the service of increased sales. His need to do so, however, lays bare the anxiety of Mary Magdalene's quasi-apostolic status.

While Caxton is attempting to appease all parties and the author of the *Gilte Legende* is attempting to keep Mary Magdalene in her place, Bokenham makes a conscious decision to free her, placing the traditional form of the phrase in the midst of material that is firmly dealing with the concerns and problems of contemporary fifteenth-century patronage culture. Furthermore, where *apostelesse* is referenced in the "lyf," it is without the limitations of the genitive "of the apostles," and the word is placed after the extra-biblical evangelical mission to Marseilles. Both of these changes expand the ways in which the word *apostelesse* can be used within and outside the phrase "apostle of the apostles," allowing the word to connect not only to contemporary devotional concerns—the contemplative aspects that Mary Magdalene is connected to in the Latin phrase "que optimam partem elegit"[108] ["and [she] chose the best share"]—but also to the active secular life of balls, class concerns, and the circumstances of the aforementioned patronage culture during the years leading to the Wars of the Roses. Intriguingly, it also reinforces Mary Magdalene's hagiographical position as a quasi-apostolic figure while simultaneously removing the limitation on that apostolic status inherent in the *apostolorum* portion of the formula.

The signification of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* in Bokenham is then not limited to the narrow, single-time usage envisioned by Ambrose and quoted by Jacobus, where she is safely relegated to secondary status after informing the apostles. Instead,

[108] Jacobus, 32.

the term *apostelesse* here serves to signify Mary Magdalene as an ongoing apostolic representation of exemplarity connected with her evangelical mission to Marseilles. Removing the limitations of the genitive qualifier, combined with the shift in frame to her evangelical mission as a lifelong vocation rather than a single moment, serves to mediate how she is treated in the course of the work and its interactions with its audience.

In following Jacobus' example, Bokenham marks Mary Magdalene as the perfect example of both penance and the contemplative life. He has, however that perfect contemplative perform her *imitatio Christi* by becoming active in the world in ways that not only directly mirror the actions of Christ, but also resonate both with the second active life Love mentions in the *Mirror* as well as the concerns of his aristocratic audience. As Jacobus' *vita* sets Mary Magdalene up as a near-equal to Peter, if not to Christ, the removal of the limitations on the concept of *apostelesse* created by its position in Jacobus' narrative invites an audience to contemplate notions of succession and authority in ways that would have been very useful to a political house active in foreign policy and contemplating, if not actively seeking, the English throne.

To tease out these threads in how Mary Magdalene's *vita* is used by Bokenham in the service of contemporary concerns, I will turn to the language used in the complete *Lyf*, noting where Bokenham expands or changes the standard version of events in order to underscore the concerns of his patrons, considering the possibilities this shift in the location and application of the word *apostelesse* creates. From there, I will examine the *Lyf* from its text to the framing paratext by first examining how Bokenham handles the

depiction of Mary Magdalene as a sign that Jacobus provides in his prologue, then considering how he manipulates the actual *vita* in the *Legenda Aurea* to reinforce his development of Mary Magdalene as a quasi-apostolic figure unmediated by the specific moment of revelation to the apostles. This close reading of the text, in comparison with other fifteenth-century examples of Mary Magdalene's *vita*, will show the limitations of Mary Magdalene-as-sign in Bokenham's writing as well as in the larger network of ideas regarding the saint; my analysis also demonstrates the typical mediation of those limitations as well as what Bokenham is doing differently.

Once I have discussed the prologue and "lyf" sections of the *vita,* which follow Jacobus's hypotext, I will finish with the prolocutory as an example of the mediating social and political contexts in which Bokenham's particular translation was originally developed. I then conclude the chapter with a discussion of how the three parts of the work function together, highlighting the ways in which Mary Magdalene as a semiotic packet operates within this new context, and examine the implications of the absence of the prolocutory section in the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea* in the larger political context within which the work was constructed.

My intent is to show that Bokenham is integrating his source material and connecting it to his own work in ways that do several things. First, he reconciles both the biblical account and the *Legenda* to contemporary, post-Lateran IV expectations regarding redemption, an important move if Mary Magdalene is to be considered an exemplar for a contemporary lay audience. He then builds on Jacobus' work, using selective punctualization to fashion a Mary Magdalene whose role is increased from a

Jewish woman who is part of Christ's circle and serves as an example of the repentant sinner to a figure of exemplarity akin to the other apostles, whose apostolic status is then reinforced through discussion of her evangelical mission to Marseilles. However, Bokenham goes still further, couching his discussion of her in ways that begin to remove the constraints of the *apostolorum* portion of the *apostola apostolorum* formula and increase her power as an exemplar. These changes will prove useful both in increasing the status of Mary Magdalene as a salvific figure and in allowing her example to connect to political issues surrounding the English succession at the time that he is writing—political issues that will come to a head with the Act of Accord in 1460.

The "Prologe"

Jacobus' Prologue: "*De Nomine"*

Bokenham's prologue is taken from the first fifteen lines of Jacobus. In these lines, Mary Magdalene's attributes as a sign are laid out for us. Jacobus first explains that "Maria interpretatur amarum mare uel illuminatrix aut illuminata"[109] ["Mary is interpreted as bitter sea, or illuminator, or illuminated"] before breaking down what exactly is meant by bitter sea, illuminator, and illuminated in this context. He explains how the three meanings represent "tria […] partes optime quas elegit, scilicet pars penitentie, pars contemplationis interne et pars celestis glorie"[110] ["three […] shares of which she made the best choice, namely the share of penance, the share of inward contemplation, and the share of heavenly glory"]. Jacobus echoes the biblical text here,

[109] Jacobus, 1.
[110] Ibid, 2.

suggesting that it is these three shares of which Christ is speaking in Luke 10:42 when he states "Maria optimam partem elegit, que non auferetur ab ea" ["It is Mary who has chosen the better part, and it is not to be taken from her"].[111] Already, then, Jacobus is interpreting what is a singular textual statement in its original context as a multivalent sign. To contruct this sign he is is referring to three specific elements of the context in a way that is similar to the way in which Augustine describes the appropriate technique for reading a sign in *De Doctrina Christiana.* There, as I touched on briefly in my discussion of Mary Magdalene as a Saussurean sign, Augustine makes the point that multiple meanings can come from a single statement. Augustine states:

> quando autem ex eisdem scripturae uerbis non unum aliquid, sed duo uel plura sentiuntur, etiam si latet, quid senserit ille, qui scripsit, nihil perculi est, si quodlibet eorum congurere ueritati ex aliis locis sanctarum scriptuarum doceri potest […] ille quipped auctor in eisdem uerbis, quae intellegere uolumus, et ipsam sententiam forsitan uidit.[112]
>
> [when, however, from a single passage in the Scripture not one but two or more meanings are elicited, even if what he who wrote the passage intended remains hidden, there is no danger if any of the meanings may be seen to be congruous with the truth taught in other passages of the Holy Scriptures […] for the author himself may have seen the same meaning in the words we seek to understand.]

The discussion of Mary Magdalene that Jacobus gives regarding the three portions of "optimam partem" is a classic example of this logic. Beginning from the scriptural statement from Luke he develops three separate significations that all touch on twelfth-

[111] Translation New Jerusalem Bible.
[112] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, xxvii. In Migne, comp. PL, vol. 34 col. 80.

century concerns, but are true contemporarily because of that scriptural connection. In this way, Jacobus is utilizing selective punctualization without realizing it. Scripture for Jacobus is an indivisible whole—a black box where input enters and results exit without the mechanisms of how this happens being evident—rather than the network of influences and compromises we recognize today. Using scripture in order to make his point rhetorically allows him to simply state concepts by making a scriptural connection, trusting that the accepted truth automatically validates what he is stating without requiring significant analysis on his part as an author. This will become important when we return to Bokenham and discuss how his version of the prologue adjusts what Jacobus is saying here.

After making his statement regarding the tripartite nature of "optimam partem," Jacobus then explicates each of the significations in turn, choosing to break the punctualization surrounding the figure of Mary Magdalene in specific ways that force the reader to consider particular aspects of her *vita* and what they mean. He first makes the connection between penance and "attainment of holiness," suggesting that "in quantum […] elegit optimam partem penitentie dicitur amarum mare, quia ibi multam amaritudinem habuit, quod patet quia tot lacrimas fudit quod inde domini pedes lauit"[113] ["since she chose the best part, penance, she is called bitter sea because in her penance she had much bitterness. This is evident because she washed the feet of the Lord with so many tears"]. In this instance "optimam partem" is being directly connected to her actions in Luke 7:38 and John 12:3, where she anoints the feet of Christ after washing

[113] Jacobus, 6.

them with her tears. This scene was an important part of the hagiographical construction of Mary Magdalene through iconography, as can be seen from images in the Queen Mary Psalter and Norwich Cathedral.

A  B 

Figure 3.1: Two depictions of the anointing. A, left: The Queen Mary Psalter (BL Royal MS B VII, fol. 300r). B, right: roof boss NI18 from Norwich Cathedral.[114]

It is this scene that causes other examples—such as the roof bosses in NL12 and NM6, as well as the images of her at Holy Trinity, Long Melford—to depict Mary with uncovered hair. This kind of depiction is more common in later versions such as those in the roof bosses and the woodcut referenced in the last chapter; Earlier depictions rely more on the alabastrum as a signifier. The importance of her hair, however, cannot be ignored, as folio 301v. and several depictions of her in north Germany show. In fact, contemporary German depictions of her go so far as to cover her entire body with hair—

[114] Note that both of these appear to be depicting the scene as it occurs in Luke 7:38, although the figure to the left of Christ in NI18 is interpreted by some to be Martha. Upon examination of other bosses in the sequence—primarily NI17 which depicts figures taken to be Mary and Martha coming to Lazarus' tomb and NI16 which depicts two unidentified men doing the same thing—I think it is more likely that the scene in Luke is meant here.

a remnant of Mary of Egypt's contribution to the conflated Mary Magdalene—during her legendary hermitage. Such images often depict her with a stylized garment of hair, attended by angels during her ascension into heaven to feed on manna. In these later depictions it is the hair, rather than the alabastrum, that symbolizes her.[115]

A  B 

Figure 3.2: Two depictions of Mary Magdalene stressing her hair. A: Mary Magdalene rising up to heaven in the Queen Mary Psalter (BL Royal MS 2 B VII, fol. 301v.). B: Mary Magdalene with both unbound hair and her alabastrum, from Holy Trinity, Long Melford.

Thus, iconographically her hair becomes a signifier of her act of penance just as much as the alabastrum does. Each sign as depiction is, however, slightly different; the hair is

[115] Interestingly at least one depiction—that at St. Junien—has Mary Magdalene with her attending angels and her covering of hair as well as her alabastrum.

part of her intrinsic form (and thus suitable for when she is at her most holy during her hermitage), while the alabastrum is associated with her as a penitent and a saint amongst other saints. In Peircian terms, then, what Mary Magdalene represents in terms of her definition as a sign is dependant on which attribute is stressed. Moreover, the verbal depiction of her also is dependant on the stress of a particular attribute, as the existential feature of her penance and the fact that she shed tears to wash the feet of Christ is what defines her there.

The second aspect of "optimam partem" to which Jacobus wishes to draw attention is Mary's traditional role as the contemplative part of the active/contemplative binary. He states "in quantum elegit optimam partem contemplationis interne dicitur illuminatrix, qua ibi hausit auide quod postmodum effudit abunde, ibi lumen accepit quo postmodum ceteros illustrauit"[116] ["since she chose the better part of inward contemplation, she is called illuminator, because that which she drew greedily she subsequently poured forth abundantly. There the enlightenment she grasped in that place lit up all the rest afterwards"]. Jacobus emphasizes this particular share of the "best part" because of the traditional roles of Mary and Martha as signifiers of the contemplative and active lives. While it is true, as her use in the *Mirror* shows, that by the twelfth century Mary had expanded from that binary she was still considered a representative of a the contemplative life. However, the old binary containing Martha—the contextual material contained in Luke 10:38-41—is not necessary. Only the particular aspect of Mary Magdalene's life as a contemplative, referred to in Luke 10:42, has to be

[116] Jacobus, 7.

mentioned. In repeating "optimam partem" and making the specific reference to contemplation, Jacobus reinforces the biblical validiation of his words and connects "optimam partem" with the entire tradition of Mary Magdalene as a contemplative figure without having to specifically refer to that tradition. Mary Magdalene as a sign contains these elements, but they are punctualized, hidden in a conceptual black box in much the same way that the network surrounding the images from the Queen Mary Psalter was hidden in the last chapter. By specifically referencing the contemplative life in this instance, and connecting it to "optimam partem," Jacobus is breaking the punctualization of the network in a way that forces the reader to unpack the implied set of knowledge regarding her as a contemplative figure.

The final signification of "optimam partem" that Jacobus mentions is the notion of Mary Magdalene as a particularly holy figure, stating "in quantum elegit optimam partem celestis glorie dicitur illuminata, quia tunc illuminata est et limine perfectissime cognitionis in mente et illuminabitur lumine claritatis in corpore"[117] ["as she chose the best part of heavenly glory she is called illuminated, because she is illuminated by the light of perfect knowledge in her head and will be illuminated by the bright light of clarity in her body"]. This third aspect is not referring to a biblical story, but rather to the extra-biblical body of knowledge contained in her *vita* and commonly referred to as the *vita apostolico-eremetica.* In it, Mary Magdalene undergoes an evangelical mission to Marseilles at the command of Christ (who grants her perfect knowledge in order to do so), and ultimately becomes a hermit, ascending to heaven to feed on manna until, at the

[117] Jacobus, 8.

moment of her death, she appears to Maximin clothed in light, receiving her last rites and dying.

By rendering the phrase in the same way as the other two, which are grounded more closely on biblical precedent, Jacobus is forcing the reader to acknowledge Mary Magdalene as a saint in the same way as she is recognized as a biblical figure. Since at the time of the composition of her *vita* the conflated figure of Mary Magdalene was relatively new, this framing obliquely makes the case for the conflated saint by utilizing the validity of biblical precedent. Because of punctualization, if this aspect of the saint is refused, then the other two aspects, more closely grounded in biblical precedent, would have to be refused as well. Once the network that mediates the sign is revealed, to accept one aspect is to accept them all in greater or lesser part.

A similar concept, mixed with visual representations, is at work in the Shield of the Trinity and the order of the roof bosses in Norwich Cathedral.

A  B 

Figure 3.3: Two visual representations of a network. A: the Shield of the Trinity from Holy Trinity, Long Melford. B: bay NL of Norwich Cathedral.

The Shield of the Trinity (sometimes known as the Shield of Faith) is a visual representation of the concept of the Trinitarian godhead. As part of the network of ideas surrounding the three parts of God, it, much like Jacobus' descriptions of Mary Magdalene, punctualizes the Trinity in such a way that the viewer has to accept the orthodox viewpoint. To not accept any part of the shield's text means that all of the text is rendered invalid, making analysis of the entirety necessary. That analysis means that the single unified block of signification representing God becomes something that can no longer be assumed. The depiction of the shield reinforces this by making the network visually as well as textually apparent. Likewise, accepting the crucifixion of Christ, represented by the central image of bay NL, means extra-biblical material such as the *hortulanus* (top left) must be accepted as well or the truth of the entire network is brought into question. In both cases, this selective punctualization serves as a way to fashion religious doctrine to meet contemporary spiritual needs. Selective punctualization uses the desire to keep the sign inviolate to insert material that is not necessarily scriptural in nature, but which fits the values of the time the work was written.

Jacobus engages in similar selective punctualization when he refers to Mary Magdalene's cognomen. He states that Mary's cognomen can be read as "remaining guilty," "armed or unconquered," or "magnificent." Much as his earlier reading of her first name does, each interpretation of her cognomen refers to an aspect of Mary—either her early life as a sinner, her choice to do penance through the washing and anointment

of Christ, or her extra-biblical saintly life as a figure of grace. Again, much like the initial analysis of "Maria" or bay NL, the scriptural notion—Mary Magdalene as penitent—becomes conflated with the readings of her as a habitual sinner or as a particularly holy woman contained by the extra-biblical material in her *vita.* Because Jacobus is making a specific reference to her as she appears in Luke, the desire to accept the biblical account at face value allows him to treat the non-scriptural material as facts without need of justification.

Bokenham's Prologue

Bokenham begins his version of the prologue not with the initial description of Mary's name, but instead by referring to her as "a mary," placing her in comparison to the Virgin.[118] He presents both Marys as signs; the Virgin is "wyth-owtyn synne" and the one who "of all mankynde bare þe solace," while the Magdalene "Padone[sic] thorgh penaunce dede purchace."[119] This comparison is not prominent in the hypotext, and so is entirely of Bokenham's invention in the translation. Furthermore, neither of the other translations of the *Legenda Aurea* into English already mentioned makes this overt move of acknowledging the Virgin in discussing Mary Magdalene. The *Gilte Legende* does not even consider Jacobus' prologue, instead jumping right into the section titled "De Sancta Maria Magdalena" in the Latin. Caxton prints the prologue in his translation, remaining faithful to the Latin even if he loses some of the nuance of the original.[120] Ranging outside of sources that claim to be translations of the *Legenda,* the *South English*

[118] Bokenham, 5263. AL: "a marie."
[119] Ibid, 5269. AL: "with owtyn synne", "of al mankynde bar the solace", "Pardone throgh penaunce dede purchace."
[120] Caxton, 1483, fol. ccxvi r.

Legendary begins either with a general admonition to readers of every station to pay attention,[121] or immediately with its version of the "De Sancta Maria Magdalena," modeled in part on the *Legenda Aurea*. It appears then that unless the author is specifically translating the *Legenda*, as Caxton is, the prologue is usually missing and the explicit connection between Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary is never stressed.[122]

While it has no analogues in the prologue material of the various versions of the *vita*, the comparison between Mary Magdalene and the Virgin in Bokenham's prologue does come from a trend towards conflating the Virgin Mary with Mary Magdalene. Conflation with the Virgin has already been shown in Love's *Mirror*, and as Haskins notes, the Virgin Mary, due to the immaculate conception, was perceived to be entirely without sin and thus completely innocent. This innocence reversed Eve's sin.[123] Ultimately, however, "Mary's apotheosis in the celestial hierarchy, her final triumph as Queen of Heaven, effectively removed her from the sphere of ordinary women."[124] Haskins further notes that Mary Magdalene filled the void left by the Virgin's inaccessibility as a figure for people who were not themselves perfect, but could strive to be, through her embodiment of penance. Because of her popularity as an exemplar she

[121] Horstmann, 1-8.
[122] This is particularly interesting considering the discovery of the Abbotsford *Legenda*. As that text has a much more expanded list of hagiographies that follows the *Legenda Aurea* and is titled as such in Sir Walter Scott's 1838 catalog of the library (*Catalog of the Library at Abbotsford*, Edinburgh, 1838), the inclusion of the prologue here, even in altered form, suggests the possibility that the *vitae* in the *Legendys* served multiple purposes in the fifteenth century. See further Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham." *Speculum* 82.4 (2007): 932-949 regarding the interplay between the two versions of the text.
[123] Consider N-Town play 11, where Gabryel states "Here, this Eva is turnyd Ave, / That is to say, withowte sorwe are we now!" (1269-1270) for a roughly contemporaneous example of this idea.
[124] Haskins, 141.

becomes, along with the Virgin, the "Second Eve" associated with Christ's "Second Adam."

Once he moves past this first stanza, however, Bokenham follows Jacobus' example in laying out Mary Magdalene's attributes as a saint. He expressly states that he is following what "legenda aurea doth specyfye" regarding the three interpretations of her name.[125] How he does so provides insight into his positioning of the saint in the larger *vita* as well as in the ways in which the saint is perceived in the fifteenth century environment of the work.

Where Jacobus maintains a detached tone in his description of the signification of the name Mary as bitter sea, illuminator, or illuminated, Bokenham inserts himself into the explanation through the use of value judgements akin to those Love uses to explicate scriptural passages. He states that the name Mary "wurthyly […] pertentyth" to the saint "as it semyth me," before suggesting that Mary Magdalene "had ful ryht" to the three significations.[126] By laying them out in this way, Bokenham is protecting what he has just stated in the prior stanza, because if the reader should disagree with any of the significations, he or she is disagreeing not with Bokenham, but with the authoritative source he is utilizing. At the same time, he uses the qualifying statements—which he does not make in the prior stanza—in order to weld the increased importance of the Magdalene implied in the earlier statement to Jacobus' already extant three

[125] Bokenham, 5273.
[126] Ibid., 5271-5272, 5278. AL: "wurthyly […] p*er*tenyth", "as yt semyth me", "had ful ryght."

punctualizations. He is taking a cue from his source in his strategy, but instead of using biblical authority he is using the authority of Jacobus' text itself.

Once Bokenham has done this work of welding his interpretation of Mary Magdalene as co-equal with the Virgin Mary onto the already existing significations, this narrative voice retreats a bit, with the next five stanzas serving only to lay out Jacobus' three significations in fairly straightforward language that adheres closely to the Latin in intent. The major narrative change is one aside to the reader per stanza, with Bokenham hoping to seek heaven, stating that it seemed to him correct that Mary Magdalene be called "bitter sea," and explaining the Latin "illumynere" to the reader.[127]

In explaining Jacobus' interpretation of Magdalene, Bokenham makes a similar move. First he refers back to Jacobus in laying out the interpretation, stressing that what comes after is based on the authority of the earlier text. He also deviates from Jacobus' explanations of the significations of the name Magdalene in the stanza regarding the time before her conversion. Where Jacobus simply states that she was burdened by guilt, Bokenham directly mentions that she is "Dysseuyrd from god & heuenely cu*m*pany."[128] He foreshadows the reputation loss Mary Magdalene suffers in the vita by particular reference to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and translates the Latin "obligationem ad penam eternam" ["obligating [her] to eternal punishment"] to specifically refer to the

[127] Ibid., 5293, 5297, 5306. Interestingly, the verb "illuminere" (second person singular present passive subjunctive of "illuminare") does not appear in the section of Jacobus that Bokenham is working from here in the Maggioni source. Instead, it is rendered as "illuminabitur." This may mean that the text that Bokenham was working from a slightly different Latin version of the *Meditaciones*.
[128] Ibid., 5329-5331. AL: "Dysseueryd from god and heuenely c*o*npany."

devil and the fires of hell.[129] Furthermore, the stanza describing the time after her conversion, after emphasizing how "strou*n*g she wex & how myhty" in spiritual grace, ties the *vita* and gospel together in explaining how sinners can themselves find redemption:

> Who lyst know, he not hens pace
> Tyl completely rede be þis story,
> Wych both of þe gospel, þat kan not ly,
> And of hyr legend to-gydyr is bounde,
> And he shal fynde þat, wher wrechydly
> Synne regnyd, g*ra*ce doth sup*er*habounde.[130]

Not only does this help to connect the "prologue" section with the "lyf," it also even more closely connects the vita with the gospel, and states explicitly the use of gospel truth in validating the events of the vita by stating first that the gospel "kan not ly" and second that the "story" that is about to be related is "bounde" with both the inviolate gospel and with "hyr legende." "Story," here, is the entire narrative history of the saint, while "legend" refers only to the non-biblical material that has grown up around Mary Magdalene.[131] With this transition, then, Bokenham is making a differentiation between the "lyf" portion of the text and its source material through this express statement of the

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[129] Ibid., 5334.

[130] Ibid., 5344, 5345-5350. AL: "stronge she wex and how mygthy",
Whoo so lyst to knowe he hens not pace
Tyl completly red be thys story
Wyth bothe of the gospel that kan not ly
And of hyre legende to gedyr ys bounde
And he shal fynd that where wrecchydly
Synne regnyd g*ra*ce dooth sup*er*habounde.

[131] *MED*. "Story" 1a. Accessed 02-28-2013;"Legende" 1a.Accessed 02-28-2013.

connection between the two in such a way that he deliberately punctualizes the "lyf" in order to utilize the authority of scripture to protect the whole.

This ends the section of the prologue directly modeled off of Jacobus' logic. The final two stanzas are instead an intercessionary prayer to the saint, and while it this section appears in both versions of the text, it functions slightly differently in each. This difference has implications for how Mary Magdalene is seen as a figure of fifteenth century piety, especially in terms of audience and the intent of Bokenham as an author in signifying Mary Magdalene.

Both versions are similar in broad structure. The first of the two final stanzas serves as an opening prayer, harkening back to the last stanza by referring to Mary Magdalene as she who "grace aftyr synne copiously founde" and requesting that she "Let not sathanas wyth hys sotyl gyn / of þem þat þe seruy*n* þe soulys co*n*founde."[132] This reinforces the strength of the saint through heavenly grace, which is the point of Jacobus' third signification of the Magdalene. It also suggests that, to Bokenham, Mary Magdalene has a particular efficacy towards protecting sinners from the devil's wiles, in keeping with her signification as *the* exemplar of repentance and penitence. In the next section, Bokenham will develop this theme further through his translation of the "lyf."

[132] Bokenham, 5352-5354. AL: "grace afftyr synne copiously founde", "Lete not sathanas wyth hys subtyl gyn / Of hem that the servyn the soulys *con*founde."

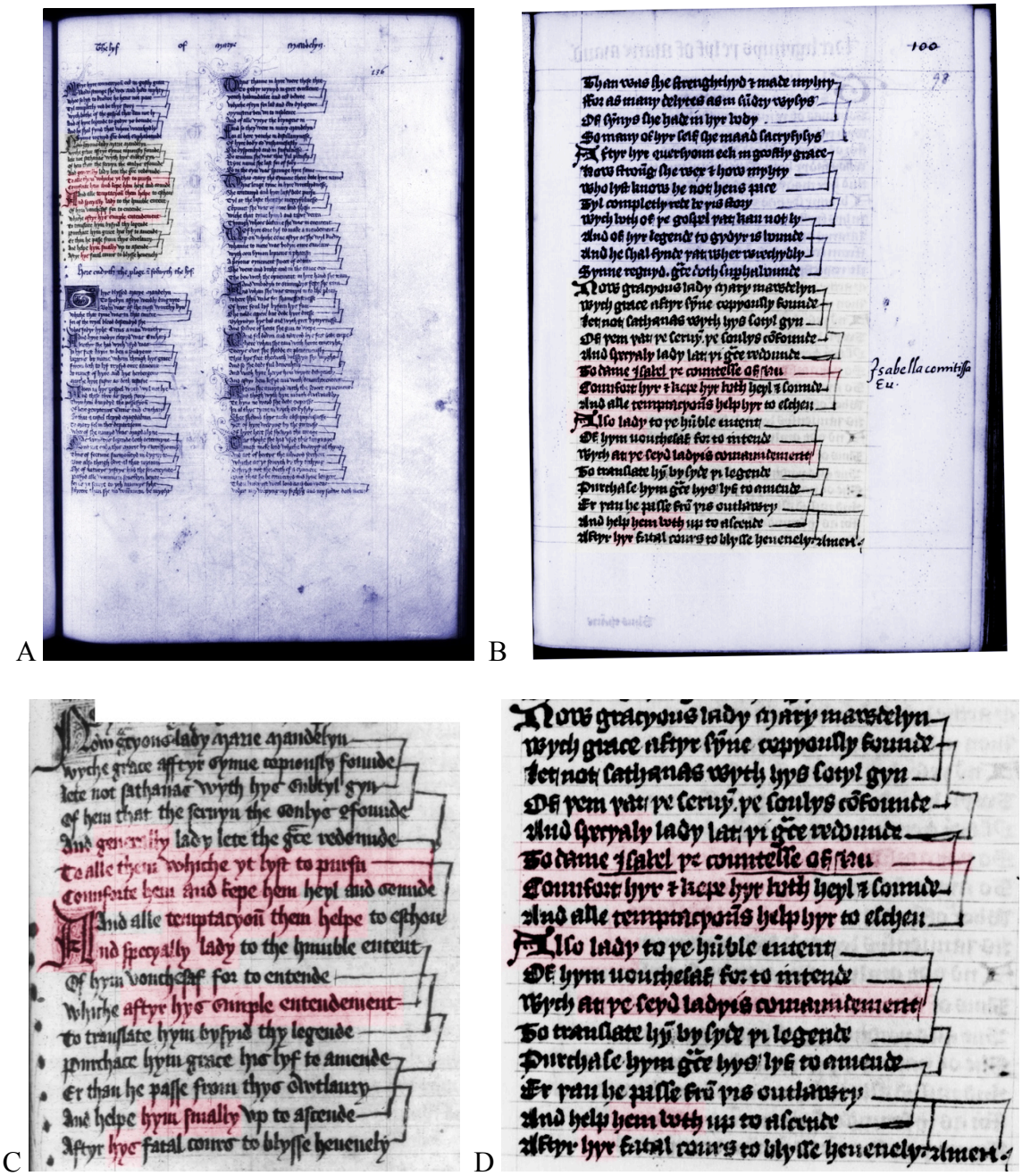

Figure 3.4: The two versions of the intercessionary prayer. A: the version in the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea* (Abbotsford Library B.3.1, fol. 136r.). B: the version in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (BL Arundel 327, fol. 98r.). C and D: the particular stanzas removed from their manuscript and poetic context. The stanzas are left uncolored save for those sections that are changed, which are given a red overlay. Those sections of the manuscript that are not the stanzas in question have been given a blue wash.

Although this general prayer for intercession occurs in both versions, in the *Legendys* Bokenham continues with lines requesting that the Magdalene "specyaly" let her "g*ra*ce redounde" in the life of Isabel Bouchier, the patroness of the piece in that work. In the Abbotsford *Legenda*, however, these lines request that Mary Magdalene "generally" let her grace "redounde / To alle them whiche yt lyst to persu."[133] This places the responsibility for salvation in the hands of the reader and reinforces the concept of Mary Magdalene as an example, rather than as a source of protection and a special guide.

The final stanza also has a slight change. While most of the changes are due to the shift from the specific to the general between the two texts, Bokenham states in the Abbotsford *Lgenda* that he requests that Mary Magdalene "specyally" look out for him and to "helpe hym finally" to ascend to heaven after his death. In the *Legendys*, however, Bokenham has already made the specific request for the Magdalene's intercession to protect Isobel Bouchier. For this reason, "specyally" is removed from the text, and the final two stanzas are changed to request that she "help hem both" to ascend to heaven after the death of Bouchier, not of Bokenham. Finally, rather than suggesting that the *vita* is the result of his "simple entendement," the *Legendys* affiliates the production of the text with Bouchier, insisting instead that the text was written "at þe seyd ladyis comaundement."[134] This change, when combined with the reference requesting Mary Magdalene's help after *Bouchier's* death in the final line, makes the

[133] Ibid., 5355.
[134] Ibid., 5361.

entire text much more a personal guide to exemplarity affiliated with Bouchier than a more general guide. I will speak about the reasons for this change between the two texts more when I discuss the prolocutory, but for now this distinction, a final punctualization in the prologue, is worth keeping in mind.

Besides following Jacobus' model, which is itself a type of call to authority, the prologue does several things that speak to Bokenham's understanding of how the saint functions as a sign and more importantly, to his awareness of how to manipulate that sign in order to bring it into alignment with his goals. By including the Virgin, Bokenham shows an early indication of an impulse that carries throughout the *vita*: the deliberate use of punctualization and association to control how Mary Magdalene functions as a sign throughout the work. His conflation of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene through the coincidence of their shared name is not a new idea. Nor is the idea of conflating Mary Magdalene and the Virgin, as Haskins notes. Bokenham, however, affiliates the concepts of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin in the reader's mind, simultaneously reinforcing the importance of Mary Magdalene and her particular efficacy as a figure both associated with and discrete from the Virgin Mary. The intercessionary prayer at the end highlights this affiliation. The connection to sin and penance Bokenham stresses in his analysis of Jacobus' prior punctualizations creates an assumption that Mary Magdalene is the best-equipped saint both to help sinners achieve heaven and to protect them from the fires of hell. Finally, Bokenham's analysis, with its connection to the Virgin and direct request of the saint, is more personal than Jacobus' analysis. This personal cast is somewhat artificial, as evidenced by the ease with which

Bokenham changes for whom exactly Mary Magdalene is intended to intercede. However, note that he does not remove the request for intercession for himself even when the prologue is cast as a product for a patron—Bokenham is manipulating the text, but it would be a mistake to assume he is not concerned with his own salvation as well.

The intention of these changes is to baldly state who and what Mary Magdalene is in Bokenham's eyes: *the* exemplar of penance. The deliberateness of his statements stresses this connection, and it is her position as an *apostelesse* that provides her with the necessary connections—to Christ, to the Virgin, and to scripture—to allow Bokenham to make this case. The next section will show that it is not only through the direct statement, but also through shading the meaning of the *vita* as he has received it that he makes this claim for apostolic exemplarity.

The "Lyf"

The Scriptural Material

While in the prologue Bokenham kept fairly closely to the structure and intention of Jacobus' version, in the "lyf" he deviates more from his hypotext in the interests of increasing the prominence of his subject. According to Bokenham, the content of the poem is taken from Jacobus' (here called Ianuence) *Legenda Aurea,* the Gospel accounts of Luke and John, and Sermon 104 by Saint Augustine.[135] Structurally, it follows the narrative given in the *Legenda Aurea*, but with less of an emphasis on background detail than Jacobus gives. For example, where in the *Legenda* the full extent of Cyrus and

[135] Ibid., 5343, 5380, 5387, 5506, 5576, 5567, 5576, 5587, 5597. 5567, 5576, 5734, 5753. Although Bokenham only mentions Luke and John directly at 5343 and 5506 in the case of Luke and 5380, 5576, 5587 and 5597 in the case of John, echoes of the other gospels do appear in certain episodes.

Eucharia's holdings are given, as well as how they divided the holdings amongst themselves, in Bokenham simply mentions that the "possessyoun" of the holdings were divided amongst the three, and that "a castel callyd Magdalum / To Mary fel in þer*e* departysoun, / Where-of she namyd was Magdalyne."[136]

Furthermore, where in the *Legenda* Mary, Lazarus, and Martha's professions are given equal weight, Bokenham instead suggests that both siblings are mentioned in the "Lyf" only in relation to Mary Magdalene.[137] Lazarus is "A brothir she had" who had been a "soudyour," and Martha is first mentioned as Lazarus and Mary's "herbeiour" and then referred to as their "sustyr."[138] In addition to this subtle shift in the relationship between the three siblings, Bokenham also mentions Martha only in relation to the verses where he wants to stress that this is the Lazarus "whom þorgh hys g*ra*as / From dethe to lyf rasyd our*e* saueour."[139] Thus, the subject of the stanza is really Lazarus (as Mary's brother) and more importantly the raising of Lazarus, a fact that Bokenham explains in his final line referencing the gospel of John.[140] This relationship—suggesting that Lazarus, as the recipient of a miracle, is connected to Christ through Mary Magdalene rather than on his own—is counter to the biblical focus, which splits pride of

[136] Jacobus, 18-19, Bokenham, 5382, 5384-5386. AL: "possessyou*n,*" "a castel clepyd Magdalum / To Mary fel in ther departisoun / Wher of she namyd was Magdalyne."
[137] Jacobus, 20-21.
[138] Bokenham 5374, 5375, 5378. AL: faithful to Arundel 327 save for "herbeiour," which is rendered as "herbergour."
[139] Ibid., 5376-5377. AL: "whom thrugh hys grace / Froom deth to lyf reysyd oure saueour."
[140] Ibid., 5380.

place equally between the two siblings when speaking of them in relation to each other and gives each roughly equal importance in the narrative.[141]

Bokenham makes this move for the same reason that the Virgin Mary is introduced at the beginning of the prologue. The raising of Lazarus is one of the central moments in salvation history, representing a physical manifestation of Christ's deific power. As an example of this, the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral bay NI give the episode a significant place second only to the baptism of Christ, bookended on the opposite side by the marriage feast at Cana, the first of the seven miracles reported in John. Both bosses have two ancillary componants in adjacent bays—the marriage feast has an angel coming to fill the pots with wine (NI8) and a servant near the two pots (NI9), while the raising has Mary and Martha (NI17), as well as two unknown male figures (NI16) witnessing the miracle. In comparison, the most important moment scripturally concerning Mary Magdalene—the moment of her penance and anointing of Christ's feet—occurs in a single roof boss, NI18, at the very end of the sequence for that bay. The analogous boss, NI4, does not connect to the events of the marriage feast at Cana, but instead depicts Christ with the doctors in the temple. This difference in relationship between the events on the bosses creates an ambiguity regarding the importance of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene in the roof bosses.

[141] John 11:1, 11:5.

Figure 3.5: Lazarus and Mary Magdalene in bay NI of Norwich Cathedral. The resurrection of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene's penance are at center. To the right of the picture, Mary and Martha watch the resurrection. At left, two unnamed men watch.

A  B 

Figure 3.6: closeups from Bay NI of Norwich Cathedral. A: roof boss NI15, the raising of Lazarus. B: roof boss NI18, Mary Magdalene washing Christ's feet.

Although it seems clear at first glance that Lazarus is much more central to the events in bay NI than Mary Magdalene, the inclusion of Mary Magdalene in bay NI17 reminds the viewer that the miracle surrounding Lazarus' raising only occurs after the actions of Mary and Martha in John 11:17-11:33. As the Vulgate has it, Mary is directly involved in the miracle, with her statement "domine si fuisses hic non esset mortuus frater meus"[142] ["Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died"] serving as the final statement of doubt that Christ overcomes by raising Lazarus.

Looking at the bosses through the lens of scripture makes the relationship between NI15, NI17, and NI18 somewhat ambiguous. While the obvious reading of the relationship is that Lazarus, and more importantly the miracle featuring Lazarus, is intended to take pride of place, it is also possible, due to its position in the roof bosses, to

[142] John 11:32. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

read the relationship as stressing the importance of Mary Magdalene as a figure and the connection between her doubt at this moment and her anointment of Christ in bay NI18. If that reading is accepted, then the inclusion of Mary and Martha, and not two other disciples, in the roof bays serves to take some of the importance in this scene away from Lazarus and place it back on Mary Magdalene. All of the pieces are there to support either reading. The context that the viewer brings to them leads to a particular reading of the bosses. Unlike the roof bosses, however, Bokenham is not suggesting Mary Magdalene's primacy as a secondary or alternate reading. By rhetorically setting up the relationship between the three siblings in the way he has, he instead is stressing that the connection between Christ and all three of them comes primarily through his connection to Mary Magdalene. This interpretation of the saint will be reinforced throughout the work, as we will see.

After explaining to the reader that he is speaking of the biblical figures by connecting Mary Magdalene to Lazarus and Martha, Bokenham then spends a stanza and a half describing Mary's virtues. She "of naturys yiftys had þe souer*e*ynte / And passyd all wu*m*men [in] excellent bewte"[143] and "To-gedyr ioyned in greth excellence / Youth, abu*n*dau*n*ce, & eek beute."[144] At first, this appears to be a general acknowledgement of the connection between nobility, beauty, and youth that is a commonplace of the fifteenth century most often seen in chivalric romance, especially in the Abbotsford *Legenda* where "excellent" is replaced with "souereyn." As Simon Horobin notes, one of

[143] Bokenham, 5391-5392. AL: "of naturys yiftys had the souereynte / passyd alle wummen souereyn beute." The lack of an "in" here as well makes Sergeantson's addition of "[in]" to the line somewhat suspect, but in both cases the grammatical sense of the line requires some sort of addition.
[144] Ibid. 5396-5397. AL: "To gedyr ioynyd in gret excellence / Youth habundau*n*ce and eek bewte."

Bokenham's tendencies in developing these *vitae* is to play down "supernatural acts and miracles in favor of saints who embody virtues of greater concern to fifteenth-century noble families, such as dressing appropriately, being modest and demure, affable in company, and obedient to one's parents."[145] Bokenham underscores this goal of his in mentioning Mary's secular virtues of "Youthe, abu*n*dau*n*ce, & […] beute" in the last part of these two stanzas when he states that

> oftyn for lak of deu dylygence
> Mynystrys bene vn-to insolence,
> And of alle vycys þe bry*n*gers yn,
> A*n*d so þei were in Mary Mawdelyn.[146]

Bokenham is marking explicitly the connection Jacobus sketches when he writes"cum igitur Magdalena diuitiis abundaret, quia rerum affluentiam voluptas comes sequitur"[147] ["Magdalene, then, was very rich, and sensuous pleasure keeps company with great wealth"]. In both cases, the intention is to explain the nature of Mary Magdalene's sin and show how she came to be referred to as "the sinner." However, where Jacobus trusts the reader to make the connection, Bokenham's interest in using his legends to encourage proper behavior causes him be more specific, using Mary Magdalene as an

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[145] Horobin, "Politics," 937.
[146] Bokenham, 5398-5401. AL:
> oftyn for lak and dw diligence
> Mynistris ben un to insolence
> And of alle vycys the bryngers in
> and so they were in mary Maudelyn.

[147] Jacobus, 22.

example to drive home that it is the responsibility of each individual to watch over both the state of their own soul and of their position in society.

Bokenham underscores this point about Mary Magdalene's sin against her class in the next stanza, where in "dislauynesse" she "vnshamefastly [...] dispendyd"[148] her body. He finishes by using the phrase "so comoun she was"[149] to describe her dalliances—suggesting that the problem was not only the biblical issue with sin, but also that she had in her dalliances shown herself to be indiscreet regarding the strictures of her class as regards extramarital affairs. Since this aspect of the "lyf" serves to define the saint and how the reader should understand her at this point in the narrative, it is worth taking a moment to look at how the phrase is used.

Bokenham is playing on multiple definitions of the word "comoun" here.[150] The first and most obvious meaning is that Mary Magdalene is promiscuous, a definition supported by the ninth definition of the word in the *Middle English Dictionary*, which is in use as early as 1300. This definition also carries with it an assumption of a negative reputation, which plays very well into the concept that she loses her name due to her sins. However, other definitions of "common" also connect to Mary Magdalene and present other possible intents on Bokenham's part. The first and third definitions of the word in the *Middle English Dictionary* refer to the concept of joint use from the perspective of the individuals using her and her as what is being used, respectively. Both of these definitions are also in use as early as 1300. Lastly the eighth definition of the

[148] Bokenham, 5402-5404. AL: "distillanynesse" and "unshamefastly […] dyspendyd."
[149] Ibid., 5405. The Abbotsford *Legenda* and Arundel 327 render the line equally.
[150] *MED*. "Commune" 1,3,8,9. http://quod.lib.umich.edu.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED8618. Accessed 03-05-2013.

word, which is in use from 1400, deals specifically with both commonality in the sense of being of low social rank and of being a member of the laity rather than the clergy. The reader can choose among these definitions, understanding the saint in the moment of her sin in a way that best relates to their own lives.

Constructing the saint, even in the moment of her sin, in such a way allows her to resonate with the individual reader and makes the connection to her stronger. Furthermore, the multiple definitions of "common" have equal resonance when Mary Magdalene's eventual apostolic position and her current social class in the narrative are considered. In both cases, she is transcending commonality through Christ to take her rightful place as both a member of her social class and as a member of the clergy. This does not, however, mean that all the definitions are given the same emphasis by Bokenham.

Horobin is right that at this particular moment in the narrative, Mary Magdalene is serving as an example for the nobility. This is shown by Jacobus' decision to remove only her cognomen, leaving her first name, when he writes "'Marie þe sy*n*ner*e*' þei dede hir name,"[151] instead of the *Legenda*'s statement "peccatrix consueuerat appellari"[152] ["commonly called 'the sinner'"]. The loss, then, becomes the loss of the portion of her name that directly relates to her territorial holdings and through those territorial holdings her claims to social rank and status—which, if we accept that she exists as a sign both for the community of Bethany and for the contemporary reader, shifts what the identity

[151] Bokenham, 5408. AL: "Mary the Cynnere there dede hyre name."
[152] Jacobus, 22.

of that sign is within the community and foreshadows the shift that the biblically aware reader is anticipating.

The shift of her identity in the community, tied first to her function in the community as its territorial overlord and then to her function in the community as a freely sexually available woman, suggests that at this point she is acquiring negative exemplarity. Her upcoming redemption—the shift of concern to the reader—will then remove both of these community functions and replace them with another: the evangelic, apostolic exemplar we will see in the post-biblical material. Bokenham is using Mary Magdalene's exemplarity—both positive and negative—to chart a course for his aristocratic audience.

Signifying the Magdalene's Penance

Bokenham's account continues with a truncated version of the events at this point in the *Legenda*, discussing how she went and purchased a "box wyth oynement"[153] to take to the house of Simon the Leper and leaving out Jacobus' explanation of why the ointment was necessary.[154] This is the moment of Mary Magdalene's penance, where she will reject the sins of her previous life and give herself wholly to Christ. The *Legenda* renders this moment in a single statement, "properauit et non audens peccatrix inter iustos apparere retro secus pedes domini mansit, ubi pedes eius lacrimis lauit, capillis tersit et unguento pretioso perunxit,"[155] ["Being a sinner she did not dare mingle with the righteous, but stayed back and washed the Lord's feet with her tears, dried them with her

[153] Bokenham, 5421. AL: "box with the oynement."
[154] Jacobus, 24.
[155] Jacobus, 23.

hair, and anointed them with precious ointment,"] before moving on to the reaction of Simon the Leper to her appearance. Instead of rendering the actions of Mary Magdalene that redeem her in Christ's eyes so briefly in his translation, however, Bokenham chooses to keep the focus on Mary Magdalene, stating:

> And whan she w[as] comy*n* in-to þe place
> Where Ihesu was, for shamefastnesse
> Of hir foul lyf, beforn hys face
> She nold appere, but dede hir dresse
> Behyndy*n* hys bak, & wyth greth byttyrnesse
> And sorwe of her she gan to wepe,
> And fel doun & towert hys fete dede crepe.
> Where whan she cam, wyth hert co*n*tryte
> Terys owte she shed so plenteuously
> That hys feet þere-wyth wasshyn she myht,
> And so she dede ful deuouthly,
> And wyth hyr herys hem wypte dylyge*n*tly,
> And aftyr þat wyth a deuouth entent
> Hem anoyntyd wyth þe swet oyneme*n*t.[156]

[156] Bokenham 5423-5436. AL:

> And whan she was comyn in to the place
> Where Jhesu was for shameffastnesse
> Of hyre foul lyf beforn hys face
> She nolde appere but dede hyre dresse
> Byhyndyn hys bak and wyth gret byttyrnesse
> And sorwe of herte she gan to wepe
> And fel down and towerd hys feet dede crepe
> Where whan she cam with herte contryht
> Teerys owt she shedde so plenteuously
> That hys feet therwith wasshyn she might
> And so she dede ful deuouhtly
> And with hyre herys hem wypte diligently
> And aftyr hem bessyd and with deuouhte entent
> Hem she anoytyd with the sweet oynement.

This focus on Mary Magdalene's recognition of her sins suggests that what Bokenham has Mary Magdalene undergo the acts of penance—contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Emphasizing this moment, and making it a moment that the reader experiences with the saint, indicates the increased role of penance in spiritual life between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Bokenham's expanded scene also stresses Mary Magdalene's role as the exemplar of penance; she goes through the exact same emotions that any good penitent would and models the proper emotional state. Bokenham makes the specific nature of this example clear when he explicitly states that Mary Magdalene's heart is "co*n*tryte" before she washes Christ's feet with her tears, wipes them clean with her hair, and anoints them with the ointment she brought with her.[157]

Bokenham has now had Mary Magdalene do everything that she did in the *Legenda*, but she has not completed all of the acts of penance. The act of confession requires an acknowledgement of the sin, which Mary Magdalene cannot do if the text is to remain consistent with Luke 7:38, "et stans retro secus pedes eius lacrimis coepit

[157] This desire to show Mary Magdalene's contrition may be the reason behind the Abbotsford *Legenda*'s inclusion of "bessyd" in the line "And aftyr hem bessyd and with deuouhte entent." This inclusion ruins the meter of the line and may be an indication that Arundel 327 is the earlier version of the same text, which could show that the prolocutory is part of the original text and was removed when the text was inserted into the Abbotsford *Legenda*. However, since the meter of the poem is often irregular in spots this can not be taken as anything other than speculation.

The impetus behind the scribe altering this line to include the kiss is that the gospel of Luke is the only one of the four gospels that expressly states that Mary kissed Christ's feet. Luke 7:38 states that Mary Magdalene "osculabatur pedes eius" ["kissed his feet"] while the other synoptic gospels only mention the anointing. In addition, Christ's admonition to Simon the Leper in both Bokenham and Luke 7:45 mention the kiss, so it may have seemed to be an omission that should be rectified. Interestingly, the *South English Ministry and Passion* emphasizes the kissing of Christ's feet as part of Mary's act of contrition (1104) but does not follow it up with Christ's mentioning of the kiss in his admonition to Simon the Leper (1118-1120)—exactly the opposite approach to that taken by the version of the *Lyf* in Arundel 327. This may show that one of the reasons for the inclusion of both scenes of anointing in works that are Augustinian is to emphasize the contrition of Mary Magdalene rather than Christ's actions towards sinners.

rigare pedes eius et capillus capitis suit tergebat et osculabatur peded eius et unguebat," ["she waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them clean with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment,"] as well as the text of the *Legenda Aurea.*[158] To avoid the contradiction, Mary Magdalene's confession is rendered in the next three stanzas in a clever rhetorical move that maintains the understood unity of the synoptic gospels, stresses the importance of contrition over confession in true penance, and does not directly contradict what the *Legenda* states. Since both Bokenham and the *Legenda* emphasize that Mary Magdalene is not willing to appear before Christ (which would make stating the nature of her sins problematic), Bokenham instead suggests that the sheer amount of sorrow expressed by Mary Magdalene serves the same function as a spoken act of confession. He notes that "þow wyth hir mouth outwardly / To hym no wurde she dede expresse [...] of hyr wepyng by þe grethnesse, / Of hyr herte she shewyd þe corage, As þow she had vsyd þis language,"[159] before going on to state the words that Mary Magdalene would speak, if she could do so:

> 'O most meke lord, wych knowyst al þinge,
> And art of hertys þe inward knoware,
> Wych, as it semyth by þi techynge,
> Desyryst not þe deth of a sy*n*nere
> But þat he be conu*er*tyd & lyue lengere,
> Thou knowyst wele, lord, as I do wene,
> What my wepyng, my syhyng & my sorwe doth mene.

[158] Translation New Jerusalem Bible.
[159] Bokenham, 5437-5438, 5441-5443. AL: "thogh wyth hyre mouth owtwardly / To hym ne word she dede expresse […] Of hyre hert she shewyd the corage / as thought she had usyd this language."

Y am a sy*n*ner*e*, & of euery cryme
Wyth spottys defoulyd ful horrybylly,
And so haue I contunyd ful long tyme
Syth wyt & dyserecyoun first had I ;
Reforme me now, lord for þi mercy,
And in þis greth need be my socour,
Wych oonly consydryst sorwe & labour.'[160]

Bokenham underscores the unspoken but understood nature of this action of confession; The unspoken plea explicitly states that Christ understands what her "wepyng," "syhyng," and "sorwe doth mene." The performance of her contrition signifies not just her contrition, but also the acknowledgement of her sin and the presentation of that sin to Christ.

This need to make Christ's forgiveness of Mary Magdalene fit the penitential model is also why Bokenham expands upon the *Legenda's* account of Christ's rebuke of Simon the Leper. The *Legenda* states "cumque Symon intra se cogitaret quoniam si hic esset propheta a peccatrice se nequaquam tangi permitteret,[161] dominus illum de superba

[160] Ibid., 5444-5457. AL:
'O most meke lord whiche knowyst al thing
And art of hertys the inward serchere
Whiche as it semyth by thy techyng
Desiryst not the deeth of a synnere
But that he be conuertyd and lyue lengere
Thou knowyst weel lord as I doo wene
What my wepyng my sighing and my sorwe doth mene
I am a synnere and of euery cryme
With spottys defoulyd ful horrybyly
And so have I contunyd ful long tyme
Syth wyt and dyscrecioun first had I
Reforme me now lord for thy mercy
And in thys gret need be socour
Wiche oonly consideryst sorwe and laboure.

[161] This is an interesting echo of the "noli me tangere" moment in John 20:17, and underscores exactly *why* that moment is so important—Mary Magdalene's connection with Christ is predicated on the performance

iustitia redarguit et mulieri omnia peccata dimisit"[162] ["Now Simon the Pharisee thought to himself that if this man were a prophet, he would never allow a sinful woman to touch him; but the Lord rebuked him for his proud righteousness and told the woman that all her sins were forgiven"]. Instead of leaving the rebuke stated but not explicated, Bokenham chooses to include the parable of the two debtors from Luke. This choice shows that Mary Magdalene's actions in washing, kissing, and anointing Christ's feet are fulfilling the satisfaction portion of the act of penance, an action that is explained both by biblical precedent and by Bokenham's translation of the Latin "remittuntur tibi peccata"[163] ["Your faith has saved you"] when Christ states "many sy*n*nys to hyr forgeuy*n* now be."[164] Because the biblical account only fulfills two of the three penitential steps—contrition and satisfaction—Bokenham has to provide the extra material at lines 5444-5457 to fulfill the confession portion of the rite, and the translation of the essential action of Christ's absolution of Mary Magdalene at line 5499 to emphasize that Christ has understood Mary's heart and provided the needed response. Although the language is not that of the post-Lateran IV ritual, Bokenham's intent is for it to fulfill the same role. The ritual serves as a sign of forgiveness, and for Mary Magdalene to be forgiven as his audience would have understood it—and thus to perform her role as exemplar of penance—he has to include both the extra material and Christ's needed response.

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of physical actions as symbols of an underlying emotional and spiritual connection, as I will discuss later.
[162] Jacobus, 25.
[163] Luke 8:48. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.
[164] Bokenham 5499. AL: "manys synnys to hyre for yowyn now be."

Furthermore, in the service of his underlying goal of stressing the importance of Mary Magdalene, Bokenham expands the account given in the *Legenda* with material recounting the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ given in Luke, saying as much when he states that she "mynystyrd hy*m* & hys i*n* þer*e* nede / As in lukys gospel pleynly men may rede."[165] Bokenham's account of the moment of Mary Magdalene's forgiveness not only includes all relevant biblical material but also reconciles it to contemporary spiritual practice in a way that the authoritative material that makes up that biblical account does not.

By adjusting the scriptural facts to fit contemporary practice, Bokenham is showing that scripture, as it was understood prior to the Reformation, is not simply a static thing. Rather, it is accepted as true and inviolate in theory, but constantly adjusted to fit the realities of contemporary life in practice because it is accepted *as* true and thus not questioned. The calls to authority—to the Bible, the Doctors and Fathers of the Church, and to prior authorities—serve as ways to underscore the unchanging nature of this constantly changing set of ideas. Rather than being the ultimate and sole authority, then, scripture bound in the codex serves to mark the point which the set of ideas that are enclosed in the conceptual scripture cannot go past without forcing the reader or viewer to question the entirety of the set of concepts contained within it..

Bokenham exhibits the same impulse when he deals with the events of Mary Magdalene's life in the *Legenda.* Of the biblical episodes mentioned—the rebuke of

[165] Ibid., 5505-5506. AL: "mynistryd hym and hys in there need / As in lukys gospel pleynly men may rede."

Simon the Leper already mentioned, the driving out of the seven devils from Mary Magdalene, the raising of Lazarus, the discussion with Martha about the "best part", Judas' jealousy at Mary's use of expensive ointment, Christ's healing of Martha's bloody flux, and Martilla's crying out "blessed is the womb that bore you"—Bokenham mentions Martha's flux, the rebuke, the discussion of the "best part", the raising of Lazarus, and Judas' jealousy. All of the items in the *Legenda* are taken primarily from the accounts in the Gospels of John and Luke, and in every case save two Bokenham is careful to indicate unequivocably what particular gospel source he is using as his basis. In the rebuke of Simon mentioned above and Judas' jealousy, he does not make that same claim to authority. In these two accounts, the claim to authority would actually serve to undermine his argument, since these two accounts are actually references to the anointing of Christ as depicted in Luke 7:37-50 and John 12:1-8 respectively.[166] Examining the decision on Bokenham's part not to stress the authorities from which he draws in explaining the two anointings will help us to understand the flexibility of what is ostensibly inalterable scriptural fact in the face of contemporary fifteenth-century religious practice.

[166] It could be argued that the connection between the first account of the anointing and Luke occurs at line 5506. The issue with this is that the lines in the *Lyf* do not recount what happened in Luke:49-50, but instead stress Mary Magdalene's connection to Christ in apostolic language, stating that she "Alle þingys left" (5502) [AL: "Alle thyngs lefth"] to follow Christ, ministering to he and the disciples "in þer*e* nede" (5505) [AL: "in there nede"]. Bokenham's lines are actually much closer to Jacobus, who states that Mary Magdalene did the housekeeping for Christ and the Apostles ["procuratricem suam in itinere eam habere uoluit" ("had her do the housekeeping on his travels")], but without the apostolic overtones of her leaving all things to minister to Christ. The fact that there is no similar ambiguous mention of John in the second account of the anointing suggests further that this reference to Luke is not intended to connect to the anointing, but to the quasi-apostolic status of Mary Magdalene Bokenham refers to above.

Shaping the Sign in Context: the Benefit of Ambiguity

It is possible to alter the understanding of scriptural intent at this particular moment in Mary Magdalene's *vita* because there is not a single uniform account of the anointing across the four gospels. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke all note that the anointing occurs at the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany, John does not give a specific location for the anointing, instead saying that it took place in "Bethaniam" at a meal provided by Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.[167] Likewise, Matthew, Mark, and John agree regarding the events surrounding the anointing—that Mary arrived with ointment, which she then used to anoint Christ to the dismay of one or more disciples, at which point Christ informs the disciples that Mary has anointed him for burial[168]—but Luke uses it to discuss the parable of the two debtors rather than the exalted position of Mary Magdalene. To further complicate things, the account in John first refers to Mary prior to this event as the one who "unxit Dominum unguento et extersit pedes eius capillis,"[169] ["anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair,"] which is either an aside made in hindsight (as the Douay-Rheims frames it) or as an account of a prior anointing of Christ's feet which is simply not part of the narrative in John.

Assuming that these events are not reconciled, there are two anointings—the one at the house of Simon the Leper and the one in "Bethaniam." However, in Bokenham's

[167] Matthew 26:6, Mark 14:3, Luke 7:36.
[168] The accounts in John, Matthew and Mark differ, however, in where Christ was anointed. Matthew and Mark state that the ointment was poured over his head (Matthew 26:7, Mark 14:3), while John states that the feet, not the head, were anointed (John 12:1). They also differ in the disciples' reaction, with John limiting the dismay to Judas (John 12:4-5), and in Christ's statement that Mary's actions will be remembered (Matthew 26:13, Mark 14:9).
[169] John 11:2. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

second account of the anointing (where he stresses Judas' jealousy rather than Mary's penance), he follows the version of events found in John 12:1-8, but with the location changed to "symou*n*dys hous."[170] That choice is more in keeping with the accounts in Matthew and Mark, which take place at Simon's house, rather than the more undifferentiated "Bethaniam" in John. However, it also removes any reason for there to be two separate accounts at all.[171] Since the Eusebian canon tables explain that, at least in some instances, these two accounts were considered the same event, Bokenham gains little from not conflating the two events, as was done in some of the other accounts. Before looking at those accounts, however, there is another portion of Bokenham's particular network of influences I have not touched upon—his particular status as an Austin.

In not conflating the two versions of events and setting the account from John in Simon's house, Bokenham is taking a cue from the purported founder of his order, who stated

> Nihil itaque aliud intelligendum arbitror, nisi non quidem aliam fuisse mulierem, quae peccatrix tunc accessit ad pedes Jesu, et osculata est, et lavit lacrymis, et tersit capillis, et unxit unguento; cui Dominus adhibita similitudine de duobus debitoribus, ait dimissa esse peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum: sed eamdem Mariam bis hoc fecisse, semel scilicet quod Lucas narravit, cum primo accedens cum illa humilitate et lacrymis meruit peccatorum remissionem

[170] Bokenham, 5655.
[171] It is this account in John that Jacobus draws from in making Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus nobility in control of Bethany. Simon is not mentioned in the account in John, but the events depicted are similar to those in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9, so it is likely that Augustine (and Bokenham in turn) sets the events in Simon's house because of this connection.

> [There is nothing else to be understood, I think, unless it is to have been another woman. She, a sinner, approached the feet of Jesus on that occasion and kissed them, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment, in reference to whose case Jesus also made use of the parable of the two debtors, and said that her sins, which were many, were forgiven her because she loved much. But my theory is, that it was the same Mary who did this deed on two separate occasions, the one being that which Luke has put on record, when she approached Him first of all in that remarkable humility, and with those tears, and obtained the forgiveness of her sins]

in Chapter LXXIX of *De Consensu Evangelistarum*. Augustine goes on to state that he considers the events in John 11:2 what makes the unique nature of each account of the anointing evident:

> Nam hoc et Joannes, quamvis non sicut Lucas quemadmodum factum esset narraverit, tamen ipsam Mariam commendans commemoravit, cum jam de Lazaro resuscitando coepisset loqui, antequam veniret in Bethaniam. Quod ita ibi narrat: 'Erat autem quidam, inquit, languens Lazarus a Bethania de castello Mariae et Marthae sororis ejus. Maria autem erat quae unxit Dominum unguento, et extersit pedes ejus capillis suis, cujus frater Lazarus infirmabatur.' Hoc dicens Joannes attestatur Lucae, qui hoc in domo pharisaei cujusdam Simonis factum esse narravit. Jam itaque hoc Maria fecerat. Quod autem in Bethania rursus fecit, aliud est, quod ad Lucae narrationem non pertinet, sed pariter narratur a tribus, Joanne scilicet, Matthaeo et Marco.
>
> [For John, too, although he has not given the kind of recital which Luke has left us of the circumstances connected with that incident, has at least mentioned the fact, in commending the same Mary to our notice, when he has just begun to tell the story of the raising of Lazarus, and before his narrative brings the Lord the Bethany itself. The history which he offers us of that transaction proceeds thus : 'Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary, and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.' By this statement John attests what Luke has told us when he records a scene of this nature in the house of a certain Pharisee, whose name was Simon. Here, then, we see that Mary

> had acted in this way before that time. And what he did a second time in Bethany is a different matter, which does not belong to Luke's narrative, but is related by three of the evangelists in concert, namely, John, Matthew, and Mark.]

He sees the two accounts of the anointing as bookends surrounding the raising of Lazarus, with the account in Luke foreshadowing the account in John. Since both Augustine and Eusebius are motivated by an attempt to reconcile differences between the gospels—in effect, to prevent any possible elements of difference from undermining the conceptual framework of the religious enterprise—the fact that this decision runs counter to the general intent of *De Consensu Evangelistarum* suggests that it has an importance to followers of Augustine's teachings that it may not to other Christians. I will return now to how the anointing is understood in broader English biblical practice, bearing the connection between Bokenham and Augustine in mind.

East Anglian Literary Contexts for the Anointing in Comparison to Bokenham

Of the major legendaries and passion cycles in Middle English, the *Southern Passion* and both versions of the *Northern Passion* follow the account in John, directly connecting Judas with the concern about waste regarding the ointment.[172] Conversely, *Cursor Mundi* follows the account as it is given in Luke rather than reconcile the two accounts or provide two different versions of the event.[173] The *Gilte Legende*, as might be expected from an English translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, follows Jacobus and

[172] Brown, 97-142. Heuser and Foster,130-176. Interestingly, Simon is referred to as an "austin" in the version of the *Northern Passion* contained in Cambridge University MS. Gg. 1. 1 (Brown, 97), but is referred to as a "gud man" in Rawlinson MS. Poetry 175 (Heuser and Foster, 127).
[173] Morris, 13922-14075.

recounts both events, but in apposition to each other rather than as part of a singular narrative.[174] The D'Evelyn edition of the *South English Legendary*, while suggesting that the anointment happened only once, sidesteps the issue of which version of the anointment it chooses by rendering the event in its most simple terms, stating: "In Simondes hous þe leprous • to oure Louerd come bicas / And woss is fet wiþ hure teres • & wipede wiþ hure here / For hure sunnes he bad so • þat oure Louerd forȝef hom þere."[175] Horstmann's edition, which draws from different texts, also renders it as a singular event, but does so by having both reactions to the anointing happen immediately after each other, rather than separated by the raising of Lazarus as Bokenham has done in imitation of Augustine.[176]

Only the *South English Ministry and Passion* follows Augustine in including both of the accounts as separate events that occur at separate times. The account from Luke is mentioned in lines 1099-1124, with a line at the end—"ȝit sche anointed oure lord eftsones beforn his passioun ene"– emphasizing that this is not to be considered the only anointing and possibly suggesting a bit of anxiety regarding the anointment in conventional biblical practice. The second anointing, at lines 1907-1938, follows Bokenham and Augustine in placing the events in the house of Simon the Leper. Bokenham was an Austin, and O.S. Pickering tentatively suggests that the author of the *Ministry and Passion* may have been an Augustinian canon.[177] It may be that the

[174] Hamer, 470.
[175] D'Evelyn and Mill, 36-38. This is particularly interesting because the *Southern Passion* was written originally in connection to the *South English Legendary*. See Brown, vii-xvi.
[176] Horstmann, 94-136.
[177] Pickering, 51.

particular structure seen in both the *Ministry and Passion* and the "lyf"—the inclusion of both elements of the anointing, separated by other information from Christ's ministry but with the raising of Lazarus always immediately preceding the second anointing—is a choice of Augustinian authors. That choice may be influenced influenced by the words and authority of their founder when dealing with the anointing by Mary Magdalene.

Since there is a lack of consistency regarding the anointing between the various Middle English sources, Bokenham cannot rely on the Augustinian reading of events to remain unquestioned as conceptual scripture generally is. Making that assumption, if he is not careful, might invite commentary and possible correction from individuals more familiar with the events as they are depicted in other texts, and thus threaten the Augustinian concept of the anointing with unintended punctualization. That unintentional punctionalization might threaten his construction of Mary Magdalene as ideal penitent. At other points in the text, he might fall back on the authority of Jacobus to prevent this, but in this particular instance the way Jacobus has structured the two accounts is of little help to him.

Constructing the Anointment: Jacobus and Bokenham Compared

Jacobus first discusses the anointing and rebuke of Simon the Leper and then transitions to a plenary list of biblical items associated with Mary Magdalene. He privileges the account in Luke, placing the first anointing in a different context than the plenary list. However, this plenary list also includes the rebuke in the statement "nam

excusauit eam apud phariseum qui dicebat ipsam immundam"[178] ["He defended her when the Pharisee said she was unclean"]. In the structure of the plenary list in Latin, the events are all placed in apposition to each other rather than in a linear account. Moreover, since the events are not explicated Jacobus can use that apposition to leave ambiguous whether he refers to the same or different points in time when he talks about those events. Finally, when he does recall the two anointings in that list, he does not mention that they are, in fact, anointings, but instead the effect of them—that Simon the Leper was rebuked, and that Judas was corrected when he called Mary Magdalene wasteful. By creating the list as a series of free-floating referents regarding the figure of Mary Magdalene, but omitting a narrative structure to allow the reader to place the events in an order, Jacobus neatly sidesteps the question of the anointing entirely, concentrating only on the results.

Bokenham, however, is limited by the verse format of the "lyf," by his need to follow Augustine's decision to consider the accounts separate, and by the differences in how Middle English and Latin handle apposition. He presents the life of Mary Magdalene as a linear narrative modeled on the series of events that Jacobus lays out, and consequently cannot mention the anointing in connection to the two results in the same way that Jacobus does. Instead, he follows his understanding derived from Augustine, treating the anointing as two separate events—first as the spreading of the ointment and the rebuke to Simon mentioned above, for which he uses the account in

[178] Jacobus, 28

Luke 7:36-50, and second as the anointing of Christ's feet not by a penitent Mary Magdalene but instead by a Mary who is "enflawmyd wyth goostly graas."[179]

Because there are no clear-cut authorities with whom all of his readers will agree regarding these two versions, Bokenham either has to draw attention to the discrepancy by making two gospel references when naming sources—which runs the risk of revealing the way he is interpreting scriptural events in support of his construction of Mary Magdalene—or to deemphasize it by not making any (or at best an oblique) reference to an authority. His choice to do the latter also underscores that there is no definitive interpretation of these events in the conceptual scripture that served as a basis for Middle English spirituality. At least when the gospels could not be reconciled, that scripture was fluid enough in its particulars to be mutable on a popular, if not ecclesiastical, level. Because it was mutable in fact, but understood to be inviolate, the conceptual scripture functioned practically in a way that was similar to the free-floating set of referents Jacobus uses.

A similar impulse is at work in the Norwich cathedral roof bosses.

[179] Bokenham, 5658. AL: "enfla*u*umyd wyth gostly gras"

Figure 3.7: Bay NL of Norwich Cathedral. The roof bosses are read from the bottom up.

There, the central "spine" depicts the major events of salvation history linearly. Bay NL, for example, presents the events of the crucifixion: the nailing of Christ to the cross, the dicing for his garments, the death of Christ on the cross, his burial, and the harrowing of hell. However, the two highlighted bosses that are not on that central spine—NL12 and NL13, representing Christ appearing before Mary Magdalene and Mary Jacobi and Mary Salome coming to anoint the body of Christ, respectively—represent events that typically are associated with the resurrection and the discovery that Christ is no longer in his tomb, which is the subject of the next bay, NM (the top of figure 3.14, the soldier guarding Christ's tomb, is the beginning of this sequence).[180] It is clear that the sculptors had a certain degree of latitude regarding those events that were not on the central spine and chose events that related to that central motif but reinforced those aspects that they considered important. By choosing which referents to mention, which to ignore, and which to mention but not cite, an artist gained the ability to adjust the perception of the whole to meet whatever goals were of necessity in the production of their work.

In Bokenham's case, these goals were not simply to recount the biblical events constituting the story of Mary Magdalene in the same way that Jacobus does, but instead to reinforce Mary Magdalene's shift from representative example to singular exemplar while acknowledging the emphasis towards penance and lay confession after Lateran IV. The two events removed from Jacobus' plenary list—Martilla's cry and the casting out

[180] Interestingly, there is an analogue to boss NL12 in the next bay, NM6, which is generally interpreted to represent the *noli me tangere*. However, boss NL12 more accurately shows the traditional depiction of the scene, with Christ turned away. This makes its location here more striking.

of the seven devils—are left out not because of their miraculous nature, as Horobin argues is Bokenham's intention in the *Legendys*, but rather in the service of this reinforcement. The casting out, which is the only biblical event that mentions Mary Magdalene by her full name including the cognomen, is removed because the act of penance at the home of Simon should have been enough to remove all sin from her both by conventional understanding of the workings of the penitential model and because Christ expressly states that her sins are forgiven. The miracle—an external force acting upon Mary rather than an internal turn to contrition—is thus superfluous to the model of exemplarity Mary Magdalene becomes by virtue of her singular penance and Christ's acknowledgement of it. This emphasis on Mary Magdalene and her exemplarity is also the reason Bokenham left out Martilla's cry. Jacobus mentions Martilla only as Martha's servant, given the honor because, at one remove, she is connected to Mary Magdalene, who is especially beloved of Christ.[181]

Building the Exemplar—Martha and Lazarus in a Mary Magdalene's World

The focus of Bokenham's narrative on Mary Magdalene, emphasized by the way he handles the construction of her as a sign in the prologue, means that the connection between her and Christ is made more directly and emphatically, as I will mention below, and leaves less need for the ancillary players at Magdalene castle. In essence, Bokenham is collapsing the set of referents into a linear narrative intended to center on Mary Magdalene, Mary's direct relationship with Christ beginning with the act of penance, and the example she provides through that direct relationship to a body of readers who

[181] Jacobus, 26, 30.

cannot hope to match that connection, but can strive to attain something similar. The other people involved in the events at Magdalene castle are, as much as is possible, pushed into the background or hidden within the network labeled "Mary Magdalene." Her exemplarity, rather than the narrative of Christological time, is what matters here.

It is in relation to Mary Magdalene's exemplarity that the remaining events—Martha's flux, the discussion of the "best part," and the raising of Lazarus—are recounted. Bokenham states that "Wyth Cryst [Mary Magdalene] grew in swych famyliaryte / That hyr he chershyd ryht syngulerly."[182] This states clearly that Mary Magdalene is not considered only an example of a saved woman at this point, but as a singular exemplar who has, in some ways, transcended her gender. Bokenham further reinforces this by mentioning Martha again, but it is Martha as a part of Mary Magdalene's network. Her significations, as Bokenham describes them, are both related to and in an inferior position to Mary Magdalene, rather than existing either as part of an equal binary or in her own relationship to Christ.

Bokenham refers to Martha as Mary's "sustyr" and then as the one who "for [Christ] & hys kepte hospytalyte,"[183] establishing that the main signfiers of Martha are either connected to Mary Magdalene or as the representation of the active life with an unspoken second half of the binary represented by Mary Magdalene. Moreover, the way that Bokenham describes Martha's care for Christ and the disciples leaves out the apostolic undertones of Mary having "mynystyred" to Christ and the disciples "i*n* þer*e*

[182] Bokenham, 5508-5509. AL: "Wyth crist she grew in swych famylyaryte / That hyre he cherschyd ryht singularly"
[183] Ibid., 5510-5511. AL: "for hym and hys kepte hospitalyte"

need."[184] Finally, he notes that this is the Martha "fro*m* þe flyx who*m* he dede cure / Wych twelue yer*e* to-gedyr on hyr dede dure."[185] This single mention of Martha's flux in the *Lyf* covers the popular belief that Martha is the woman whom Christ healed in the gospel accounts.[186] By making these statements within five lines, he has established Martha's credentials, but only in the most cursory way possible and only in relation to her sister. In Bokenham's version of events the miraculous cure ceases to be part of Martha's separate account as another woman whom Christ helped, and becomes a marker establishing Mary's intimacy with Christ. Much like with Lazarus and the Virgin Mary, Bokenham has described the relationship between Mary Magdalene and another figure in such a way as to emphasize Mary Magdalene's importance.

After the account of life in Bethany, which provided Christ a respite from the city of Jerusalem where "he was odyous" and included a statement that his hosts were fed by "hys godhede,"[187] an allusion to the sacrament and foreshadowing of the final part of the *vita*, Bokenham expressly points out Mary Magdalene's turn to grace after confession:

> Lo, þus may we seen how euer*e* merciful
> God is, & synners ful besy to saue,
> By þis wu*m*man in special, wych sinful
> Fyrst was, & aftyr dede mercy craue,
> Thorgh wych not oonly she dede haue
> Of hyr greth sy*n*nys a remyssyoun
> But also she atteynyd to hy p*er*feccyoun.[188]

[184] Ibid., 5505. AL: "mynistyred," "in there nede"
[185] Ibid., 5512-5513. AL: "Of the flyx he dede cure / Wiche twelue yer to forn on here dede dure"
[186] Matthew 9:20, Mark 5:25, Luke 8:43
[187] Ibid., 5518. There is no difference between the Abbotsford *Legenda* and Arundel 327.
[188] Ibid., 5528-5534. AL:
Lo thus may we seen how euere merciful

These lines explicate the previous material, having to do with Mary Magdalene's penance and the special position afforded to her (and through her, to her siblings) by Christ. They show that she is meant to be an example to all "synners" rather than to only women or only people who were adulterers. Furthermore, the way he frames his statement at lines 5529-5530 stresses two things: first, that God is interested in and actively saving sinners, and second that Mary Magdalene "in specyal" is a means by which God saved sinful people. This reinforces the position of Mary Magdalene that he first presents in the prologue in comparison to the Virgin Mary. While the Virgin Mary by virtue of her purity is removed from humanity and her assistance in saving the sinful is hindered by her lack of knowledge of sin, Mary Magdalene has sinned many times and thus understands the nature of sin and sinners and can act as a guide for them. Moreover, the nature of Mary Magdalene's turn away from sin is especially efficacious as a guide because she not only received a remission of sins, but she also attained a state of "hy p*er*feccyoun."

In attaining this state of perfection, Mary Magdalene has already moved beyond what is possible for most people who have undergone the rite of penance and received a remission of sins, but she goes a step further. The next stanza, which serves as an introduction to the paraphrase of Luke 10:38-42's discussion of the "best part" found in

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God ys and synners ful bysy to saue
By thys woman in special wiche sinful
Ffyrst was and afftyr dede mercy craue
Thorgh wyche not oonly she dede haue
Of hyre gret synnys a remyssyoun
But also she atteynyd to hy p*er*feccyou*n.*

lines 5542 to 5569, shifts the focus from Christ's love and respect for Mary Magdalene to Mary Magdalene's towards Christ, a marked departure from his hypotext.

The relationship between the two in Jacobus is all Christ-driven: he cast the devils out of her, he kindled her love for him, and he always excused (although the word in Latin, "excusauit," also has undertones of absolution in its definition) her behavior. In comparison, Bokenham in his stanza states that Mary Magdalene "extendyd" her affection to Christ, "drew hym ny" and "lystnyd" to him "ful deuouthly." It was for these reasons, rather than because of any unbidden impulse on Christ's part, that Christ "excuse[d]" her "where-fore […] ony wythe hyr dede acuse."[189] Furthermore, Mary Magdalene's affection towards Christ is done not as a result of the perfection attained above, but in addition to it.

The effect of this shift in agency is to build Mary Magdalene up as an ever more exemplary figure in a series of stages. She progresses from someone who undergoes the acts of penance that any individual can realistically undergo to someone who is as literally perfect as it is possible to be without being the Virgin. From that satus she ascends further to be someone whom Christ is willing to defend due to her absolute fealty and devotion, rather than due to charitable impulse on his part alone. It is in the service of this conception of Mary Magdalene—someone whose constant and continual advancement as exemplum is a move towards exemplarity of a level that serves as the

[189] Bokenham, 5537-5541. AL: "extendyd," "drew hym ny," "lystnyd," "excuce", "Wherfore […] ony wyht hyre dede acuse."

reason for Christ's attachment to and defense of her—that Bokenham gives us his account of the story of the "best part."

Framing the Contemplative: Mary Magdalene and the "Best Part"

Bokenham begins first with a call to authority, stating that Luke "shewyth i*n* hys gospel"[190] an example of the sort of defense of Maty Magdalene's behavior Christ underwent. In a paraphrase of Luke 10:38-42, he states that Christ entered "a castel" and that Martha received him into her house.[191] It is at this point that Mary, "desirous / Hys wurdys to her*e* […] for deuocyou*n/* Euene at hys feet […] set doun."[192] This, in turn, causes Martha—who is busy serving Christ as hostess—to accuse her sister of "ydylnesse" and to look to Christ for aid, stating "Lord, chargyst þou not, lo, / How me my sustyr suffryth a-lone to do / Al thing? I prey þe byd hir up ryse and helpyn me to doon to þe seruyse."[193]

At this point Bokenham follows the guidance of the namesake of his order, making a point of referring to Christ as judge "int*er*pellat" and citing Augustine as his source.[194] He is alluding to Augustine's sermon 104, where Augustine uses legal language to describe this scene, stating that "dominus […] pro Maria respondit Marthae; & ipse eius factus est advocatus, qui judex fuerat interpellatus"[195] ["the Lord answered Martha for Mary; and he became her Advocate, who had been appealed to as Judge"].

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[190] Ibid., 5542. AL: "shewyth in hys gospel."
[191] Ibid., 5544-5455.
[192] Ibid., 5547. AL: "desirous / Hys wurdys to here that for deuocyen / Euene at hys feet […] set doun."
[193] Ibid., 5552-5555. AL: "ydylnesse," "lord chargist thou not loo / How me my sustir suffryth alone to do / Al thinge I pretty the bydde hyre up ryse / and helpe me to doon to the cervyse."
[194] Ibid., 5556-5557. AL: "interpellat."
[195] Augustine of Hippo, "Sermo CIV," 539.

What occurs after this is, fittingly, a series of binaries. First, he suggests that while Martha was intent on feeding Christ, Mary was intent on being fed by Christ. He repeats this again, likening Christ's words as a spiritual feast to the physical feast that Martha is preparing. From this point, Augustine asks the audience to consider how Mary must have felt, "corde intentissimo fascerentur"[196] ["feeding with the most earnest spirit"] on the words of Christ, when her sister asked him to intercede on her behalf, as an introduction to the relative merits of the active and contemplative lives.

By including the word "interpellat" and referring to Augustine as his source, Bokenham signals his intent to give an account of the active and contemplative lives tied up in the persons of Mary Magdalene and Martha—an intent that becomes evident when he states:

> þe ocupacyou*n*
> Of actyf lyf in þis mortalyte
> To þe lyf of inward contemplacyou*n*
> May i*n* no wyse paryfycat be
> Wych two lyuys fyguryd fynde we
> In þese two sustres, Marthe & Marye.[197]

[196] Ibid.
[197] Bokenham, 5570-5575. AL:
> the ocupacyou*n*
> Of actyf lyf in thys mortalyte
> To the lyf of inward contemplacyou*n*
> May in no wyse paryficat be
> Wyche two lyuys fyguryd fynde we
> In these two sustrys Marthe and Marie.

As in other moments when he cites an authority, he does not entirely agree with Augustine's words as his source, however. He agrees with Augustine that the two lives cannot be equated—this is the point of the notion of Mary choosing the better part, after all—but he seems more willing than Augustine to cast Martha's choice pejoratively rather than as the lesser of two options. He states that Martha's life is "medlyd"—a word that can mean mixed, joined, or concerned, but which also has sexual connotations and a sense of anointment—with "byttyrnesse" in comparison to Mary Magdalene's life, which is "enbaumyd"—an echo of the action which set Mary on the road to her current position—with "swetnesse" before going on to make the point that "bothen ben good."[198]

This is one of a number of oppositions that Bokenham makes in this stanza and the one prior that use the rhyme scheme to underscore the differences between first the active and contemplative lives and then between Mary and Martha, likely in conscious imitation of Augustine. He also sets "ocupacyou*n*" against "contemplacyou*n*" as end rhymes and "posatyue" against "co*m*p*ar*atyue" as internal rhymes, invoking the grammatical metaphor to suggest that the relationship between the roles of Martha and Mary Magdalene are as natural as the positive and comparative degrees of an adjective.[199]

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[198] Ibid. 5577, 5579, 5580. AL: "enbawmyd", "bothen ben good." There is also a sexual connotation to "medlyd" that "enbaumyd" lacks. See *MED*, "medlen" 4. Accessed 06-19-2013.

[199] Ibid. 5570, 5572, 5583. AL: "pesatyf", "op*er*atyf." For a survey of the use of the grammatical metaphor in medieval Europe, see Alford, 728-760. While most of Alford's examples come from Latin and French sources, he does note Langland's use of the metaphor in *Piers Plowman* in relation to his discussion of moral perfection in the persons of Dowel and Dobet. For a more in-depth analysis of how the grammatical metaphor specifically deals with the adjectival degrees in *Piers*, see Middleton, 169-188.

The juxtaposition of these words against each other gives the sense that while what Bokenham can state is limited by what "seynt Austyn doth testyfye"[200] in his sermon drawing from the gospel of John, there is a real desire on Bokenham's part—reflected in the poem's structure and his word choice—to imply that the contemplative life is not only better than the active, but that the active is somehow wrong. While the overt idea expressed by both Augustine and Bokenham is of the adulteration of the active life when compared to the contemplative, the comparison between bitterness and sweetness as well as adulteration and anointment created by Bokenham's word choice goes further to place the active life in an inferior position than Augustine seems prepared to do in his sermon. Furthermore, Bokenham does not seem to see the contemplative life as a gateway to a second active life, as Love and Johannis do, but as a goal in and of itself. The call to Augustine as an authority, then, serves as a means to justify and shield the particular word choices and framing he uses to cast the active life as not only inferior to, but in fact worse than the contemplative.

Bokenham's reason for this rhetorical move is explained in the next two stanzas. In the first of them, he quotes from the Gospel of John to explain the special position that the three siblings in Bethany possessed in Christ's sight:

> More-ouyr*e*, to shewy*n* þe syngulerte
> Of loue wych haddy*n* ryht specially
> Of god past oþire þese p*er*sonys thre,
> Seynt Ioon i*n* hys gospel seyth þus pleynly:
> 'God louyd Marthe,' q*uod* he, '& hyr sustyr Mary,

[200] Bokenham, 5576. AL: "seynt Austyn doth testifie."

And Lazer þe broþhir of þem bothe tweyne,'
No wytnesse of loue may be more pleyne.[201]

Bokenham then immediately returns to his overarching goal of presenting Mary Magdalene as a figure of exemplarity above all others, even above those who are "ryht specially" loved of Christ. In a return to the grammatical metaphor, he states that amongst the three of them "to spekyn aftyr degrees of co*m*p*ar*ysoun / Mary stood i*n* þe sup*er*latyue degree."[202] It is in the service of showing this superlative position that he mentions the raising of Lazarus.

Signifying Lazraus' Resurrection to Reflect Mary Magdalene and Reduce Martha

The account of the raising that Bokenham uses agrees in its broad strokes with John 11, which Bokenham names as his source material.[203] He begins the accounting of events with John 11:3, circumventing the aside to the first anointing that Augustine makes so much of in his discussion. Narratively, we have just finished seeing that first anointing and do not need to be reminded of it so soon, so the omission makes sense. However, as has been Bokenham's pattern in reworking the authorities he cites, events that do not touch directly on the story of Mary Magdalene (and more importantly, play

[201] Ibid., 5584-5590. AL:
More ouyr to shewen the singulerte
Of loue wych haddyn ryht specially
Of god past othere these p*er*sonys thre
Seynt Ioon in hys gospel seyth thus pleynly
God louyd marthe and hyre sustyr marye
And lazar the brother of them bothe tweyne
No wytnesse of lord may be more pleyne.
[202] Bokenham, 5591-5593. AL: "To spekyn aftyr degrees of comparisoun / Marye stood in the sup*er*latyf degree."
[203] Ibid., 5597.

up her position as exemplar) are given short shrift in the account. Thus, the meaning of the sickness and death of Lazarus given in John 11:4-15 and the danger of Christ's return to Bethany while the Jews search for him are reduced to only the barest and most necessary elements:

> And in þis mene ty*m* lazer dede dye,
> And þan cryst þus seyd to hys dyscyplys:
> 'Lazarus our*e* frende slepyth sothlye.
> Lat us go wake hy*m*'; þan þe seyd þis:
> 'If he be a-slepe he safe ynowe is.
> What shulde we do þer*e*? hast þou forget
> How þe to be sleyn þe Iewys do threte?'
> Than cryst hem tolde euene opynly
> That Lazarus deed was, in wurdys pleyn ;
> Wherfore returnyn on-to Iewery
> He wold, hym for to clepyn ageyn
> From dethe to lyf, þis is certeyn.
> And anoon furth-wyth he dede hym hye
> Euen i*n* þe ryht weye to bethanye.[204]

[204] Ibid. 5605-5618. AL:

> And in thys mene tyme lazar dede dye
> and than thus crist seyde to hys dysciplys
> lazarus oure frend ys a slepe sothlye
> lete us goon wakyn hym thane they seyde this
> yf he be a slepe he saf ynow ys
> what shuld we doon there hast thou forget
> how the to be slayn the iewys doon threte
> Whan crist hem told euene opeynly
> That lazar deed was in wurdys pleyn
> Wherefore returnyd in to Jewery
> He wolde hym for the clepyn agayn
> Ffrom deth to lyf thy sys certeyn
> Aand anoon forthwith he dede hym hye
> Euene the ryht weye en to Bethanye.

This bare-bones statement of the facts of the narrative without the efficacious material of the account in John expands upon Jacobus, but not by much. It is as though Bokenham is attempting to get through the material as quickly as possible to get to the point where Christ and Mary Magdalene will meet, without removing anything that might draw the attention of a casual reader that this is his intent. He carefully skirts the edges of forcing the reader to become aware of exactly how he is manipulating his source material. This approach is different than the account in the *South English Ministry and Passion*, where nearly a thousand lines of parables echoing the gospels are between the first anointing and the account of the raising of Lazarus.[205] If Augustine's attempt to reconcile the two anointings is taken as the template for how these events should be framed, the *South English Ministry and Passion* more closely fits his precedent and the biblical account—acknowledging the three siblings as co-equal in the miracle of the raising in a way that Bokenham's account does not.

This tenuous following of precedent on Bokenham's part is especially obvious when looking at the role of Martha within the account. John 11:20-27 concerns a direct interaction between Christ and Martha, wherein Christ asks Martha if she believes him to be the "resurrection and the life," stating "ego sum resurrection et vita qui credit in me et si mortuus fuerit vivet et omnis qui vivet et credit in me non morietur in aeternum credis hoc."[206] ["I am the resurrection. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you

[205] Pickering, 1125-1822.
[206] John 11:25-26. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

believe this?"] This is reflected in the *South English Ministry and Passion*, where the full text of Christ's quotation is rendered as "I am vprysyng and lyf; hoso wil beleue vpon me, / þowȝ he be ded ȝit he schal lyve, & euery man þat in lyf is a leuyth in me he schal not deyȝe withouttyn ende iwis. / Mayst þou, Marþa, beleue wel þis?"[207] It is not, however, reflected in the *lyf* as Bokenham renders it. Instead, that affirmation by Christ to Martha, and through Martha to all mankind, is referred to as "a long dalyau*n*ce."[208] Likewise, Martha is no longer directly stated to be the person who informed Mary Magdalene that Christ has arrived, as she is in both the Vulgate and the *South English Ministry and Passion.*[209] Instead, Mary Magdalene is "at home in hyr careful trau*n*ce / Tyl of crystys coming she warnyd was."[210]

Bokenham's decision to remove this scene from his narrative does two things. First, it follows Bokenham's general pattern of reducing the role of Martha in favor of that of Mary. Since John 11:20-27 is a special moment of connection between Christ and Martha, to privilege Mary requires that this moment be set aside somehow. The concept of Christ as the resurrection and life is, however, fundamental to both Christian thinking and foreshadows what is about to happen between Christ and Lazarus, however. For this reason, it cannot be removed entirely, as the casting out of the seven devils or the cry by Martilla were. Instead, Bokenham utilizes the audience's knowledge of conceptual scripture to fill in the gaps created by his oblique reference without having to directly state the connection or attract undue attention to it. He then, by having Mary in a

[207] Pickering, 1850-1853.
[208] Bokenham, 5622. AL: "a long dalyaunce."
[209] John 11:28, Pickering 1855-1856.
[210] Bokenham, 5623-5624. AL: "at hom in hyre carful traunce / Tyl of cristis coming she warnyd was"

"traunce," seemingly alone rather than being consoled by fellow mourners as she is in the Vulgate and the *Ministry and Passion*,[211] reinforces her holy status by using a word whose multiple meanings allow a reader to interpret Mary Magdalene in different ways.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* has three definitions of the word "trance" that are applicable, all of which are in play in the fifteenth century.[212] The first, currently obsolete but still very valid at the time Bokenham is writing, is "a state of extreme apprehension or dread; a state of doubt or suspense." The second is "a stunned or dazed state," and the third is "a state of mental abstraction from external things; absorption, exaltation, rapture, ecstasy." Likewise, the *Middle English Dictionary* has two definitions that roughly correspond to the first and third definitions from the OED.[213] While the adjective used to modify "traunce," "careful," shades the meaning more towards the first definition, the specific choice to use the word "traunce" means that all of the meanings of the word mentioned above are present in the mind of the reader. As was mentioned in the last chapter during the discussion of Saussurean semiotics, the selection of a particular image or word means that all the associations of that word become encoded in that choice.

Mary Magdalene's mental state as a result of her grief can be taken as another sign of her holiness, just as the visionary trances of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich—which, as you will recall, were presaged by a traumatic event (mental in the case of Margery, physical in the case of Julian) on both their parts—were taken by some

[211] John 11:19, Pickering 1858.
[212] *Oxford English Dictionary.*
[213] *MED.* "Traunce." Accessed 03-09-2013.

audiences as signs of their particular spirituality. Bokenham is using the word "traunce," when combined with the adjective "careful" and this specific mention of her solitary state, to signify to the reader that Mary Magdalene is alone in sorrowful contemplation, rather than unthinking, grief-stricken woe. Likewise, just as Julian's visionary experiences were authorized by her position as an anchoress, Mary Magdalene's particular efficacy as an exemplar and intercessor is being authorized by Bokenham over that of Martha through the use of language and tropes connected with visionary experiences despite Martha having the more famous, and arguably more important, conversation with Christ at this time.

Despite this decision to authorize Mary over Martha through selective punctualization of the network of events surrounding the raising of Lazarus, this authorization does not overtly carry through to the conversation between Mary Magdalene and Christ. The *lyf,* the *South English Ministry and Passion*, and John 11:32 all render the conversation in the same broad strokes, allowing for vageries of translation. In all three cases, Mary tearfully rebukes Christ, suggesting that Lazarus' death occurred because Christ was absent from Bethany. However, the biblical account and the *South English Ministry and Passion* have Mary fall to Christ's feet before speaking, while Bokenham leaves this moment out.[214] In both anointing scenes, Bokenham has presented the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ as being primarily signified by a physical abasement before Christ. That he does not do it at the

[214] Pickering, 1863.

threshold of the miracle suggests that her tears at the moment signify not her love for Christ, but rather her grief over her brother's death.

Bokenham again sets Mary Magdalene at the center of events, stating that "whan cryst hyr sey wepyng, for uere pyte / He wept also."[215] This is a change from the events as they are depicted in the gospel or the *South English Ministry and Passion,* leaving out the Jews who weep with Mary Magdalene, placing Mary Magdalene more centrally in the narrative, and highlighting her exemplary status.[216] Conversely, in John 11:33, Mary Magdalene serves as a representative for all mankind—a Jew amongst Jews, important through her connection to Lazarus and as a symbolic representation of Christ's compassion for all mankind. This signification is different from Lazarus'; he represents Christ's deific power as a visual marker to mankind, an interpretation that is at the heart of his placement in the roof of Norwich cathedral, as well as in Augustine's interpretation of events.

Despite scripture and the visual and textual analogues interpreting Mary Magdalene's role in the raising of Lazarus as representative of all mankind, that interpretation does not work with Mary Magdalene's signification as Bokenham has developed it throughout the "lyf." Following the interpretation in the *South English Ministry and Passion* reduces Mary Magdalene to a representative of a group.[217] Involving others in the events of the raising implies that Mary Magdalene is loved of Christ, but may not be as especially loved of Christ as Bokenham wishes to indicate.

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[215] Bokenham, 5630-5631. AL: "whanne crist hyre sey wepyng for very pyte / He wepte also."
[216] John 11:33, Pickering, 1864.
[217] Pickering, 1870.

Bokenham resolves this by only mentioning Martha in the brief episode referred to above and not mentioning the Jews at all, but there is one other obstacle before the actual raising—Martha's moment of doubt in John 11:39: "dicit ei Martha soror eius qui mortuus fuerat Dominae iam fetet quadriduanus enim est" ["Martha, the sister of him that was dead saith to him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days"].[218] This moment references the earlier conversation between Christ and Martha and reinforces the concept of Christ as the resurrection and the life. As such, it serves to tie Christ's power to the events of the narrative, but Bokenham has removed the earlier conversation except for the barest of references. Here, then, Bokenham goes still further in removing Martha from the narrative, putting the analogous words "Syre, four dayis been past syth he dede deye / Wherefor*e* we trow þe body doth stynke" into Mary's mouth.[219]

The actual raising of Lazarus is recounted in a single stanza, wherein Christ's difficulty performing the miracle is emphasized. He is stated to be "troblyd in spyryht ful meruelously" and appears to be beseeching heaven for aid.[220] Bokenham then uses the next stanza to reinforce the allegorical context of the raising, stating first that "swych merueyls loue kan do" before tying it back into scripture with a direct quote from Canticles 8:6: "quia fortis ut mors est dileccio"[221] ["for love is as strong as death"].

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[218] Translation Douai-Rheims.
[219] Bokenham, 5635-5636. AL: "Syre foure dayis past byn seyth he dede deye / Wherfore we trowe the body doth stynke."
[220] Ibid., 5641, 5642. AL: "troublyd in spirit ful meruelously."
[221] Ibid., 5652-5653. AL: "swyche maruayls loue kan do / Quia fortis vt mors est dilectio."

While the person who is loved here could be taken to mean Lazarus based on the statement that Lazarus is "he whom þou louyst,"[222] I believe it is more likely we are meant to assume that Christ's love for Mary Magdalene is what caused him to raise Lazarus. It is not until Mary is crying in front of Christ that he asks where the stone is, and Lazarus is never referred to as someone whom he loves by Christ himself, only as a "frende."[223] Furthermore, the second anointing itself serves to reinforce that it is Mary Magdalene, not Lazarus, with whom Christ is particularly concerned.

Although the events of the second anointing do not differ from the account given in John 12:3, the statement made by Christ is slightly different. In explaining Mary Magdalene's actions as a signification of his upcoming death, Bokenham has Christ make a direct connection to the *apostla apostolorum* moment, stating that by anointing him Mary Magdalene "a mysterye hath shewyd of my sepulture" before going on to state that

> Where-fore I wyl þat ye wel knowe,
> Hereaftyr whan þe gospel shal be
> Thorgh-owte þe werd by prechours sowe,
> Than shal it be seyd in many a cu*n*tre
> That þis she dede in wurshype of me[224]

[222] Ibid., 5604.
[223] Ibid., 5630-5632, 5607. AL: "frend."
[224] Ibid., 5674, 5675-5679. AL: "A misterye hath shewyd of myn sepulture",
Wherfore I wyl that ye weel knowe
Here afftyr whan the gospel shal be
Thorght owt the werd by p*re*chours sowe
Than shal yt be seyd in many a cuntre
That thys she dede in wurshyp of me.

This statement is not from John, but rather is a paraphrase of Matthew 26:10-13 and Mark 14:6-9. Bokenham goes on, however, to make the connection between the anointing and the raising more explicit:

> See now þan how þis p*er*fyth creature
> Conioynyd was on-to hyr creatur[225]
> Of trew loue þorgh affeccyou*n* pure,
> And eek he to hyr in syngule*r*e amour;
> Fore nere of hys lyf in þe last our,
> Euen but a lytyl beforn hys passyoun,
> Of hyr he made þis specyal co*m*mendacyoun[226]

The raising of Lazarus, then, is not a sign indicating Christ's love for Lazarus, but instead a sign of his love for Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene has remade herself into a "p*er*fyth creature," and it is for this reason that Christ raises her brother. Even when the word is changed from "amour" to "onour" in the Abbotsford *Legenda* the overall sense of the stanza—that Mary Magdalene's unique status is what causes Christ to raise Lazarus—remains. The second anointing serves as a way to make the connection between Christ and Mary Magdalene more explicit.

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[225] Originally this was "creature," but the e has been erased in the manuscript.

[226] Ibid., 5682-5690. AL:

> See now thane how thys p*er*fyht creature
> Comoynd was on to hys creator
> Of trewe loue thorgh affecyoun pure
> And eek he to hyre in synguler onour
> For ner of hys lyf in the last our
> Euene but alytyl beofrn hys passyoun
> Of hyre he mad thys special c*om*mendaco*u*n.

Note that there are some slight differences: "hys" instead of "hyr" at line 5683, which I believe to be a scribal error; the omission of the y in "commendacyoun" at line 5688, which again is a scribal error, and the substitution of "onour" for "amour" in line 5685.

Mary Magdalene as *Apostola Apostolorum* and the *Noli Me Tangere*

Bokenham expands further on Mary Magdalene's special devotion to Christ after his death, stating that "so feruent to hym was hyr cheryte / that for no feer she fro hym would fle," despite the fact that the other disciples have all forsaken him.[227] He has her stay with the body—no other disciple is mentioned—until he is buried. Only when she goes to buy ointment "wyth greth m*ur*nyng" does another Mary enter to accompany her in anointing the body. [228] As was seen in the sequence of roof bosses, even if we ignore the scriptural words in this regard the conceptual scripture proposes that several people were present at the crucifixion and that two other Marys went with the Magdalene to anoint Christ's body. In this stanza, then, Mary Magdalene's special relationship with Christ is being underscored yet again, making her the only person willing to stay with him throughout the crucifixion and after his burial.

This singular relationship is stressed again after their return to discover the body missing. She still stays by the now-empty tomb, looking "besyly wyth a wepyng yhe / If hyr loue onywher*e* she myht aspye."[229] It is at this point that she is "fyrst of alle owr*e* lord" to see, in the likeness of a gardener.[230] The events of the *hortulanus* scene precede as expected from here, with Christ referring to her by name and commanding her to go tell the other disciples that he is risen. What gets glossed over, however, is the *noli me tangere* scene. Mary "wold hem han kyssyd but he nold hyr lete, and there is no admonition to not touch him, but rather a sense that he wants her to get on with her

[227] Ibid., 5691-5693. AL: "So feruent to hym was hyre cheryte / That for no feer she fro hym wold fle."
[228] Ibid., 5696. AL: "wyth gret mornyng."
[229] Ibid., 5707-5708. AL: "bysyly wyth a wepyng ihe / yf ony wher here loue she myht aspye."
[230] Ibid., 5713. AL: "first of alle oure lord."

mission to the other disciples, itself an faint echo of the explanation Johannis and Love give for the *noli me tangere* in the *Meditaciones* and *Mirror*.[231] When the importance of this scene is considered, especially in the context of other contemporary accounts such as those in the *Southern Passion* and the *South English Ministry and Passion*, this seems odd.[232] However, much like the selection of events from the *Legenda*, Bokenham here is choosing to reinforce Mary Magdalene's perfection. Suggesting that she is somehow unclean and therefore unworthy to touch the risen Christ would go against this constant reinforcement of her perfection. To remove it entirely would risk critique of Mary Magdalene as Bokenham has presented her, and so he does include it—in the most oblique, tangential way possible, without explanation as to what has changed to not allow her to touch Christ.

At this point in the *Legenda,* Jacobus refers to Mary Magdalene as an *apostola apostolorum*. If the concept of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* is intended to function in the same way in Bokenham, we should expect a reference to *apostelesse* here. However, it is entirely missing. Instead, what we receive is a reiteration of the importance of Mary Magdalene to the biblical life of Christ. Bokenham wants to propose that Mary Magdalene is important, and he does so by stressing her singular position:

> Lo, þus & many ano-þir wyse,
> As in þe gospelys men mown aspye,
> And myche bettyr þan I now kan deuyse
> Pryuylegyd was þis blessyd Marye

[231] Ibid., 5719. AL: "wold hym han kyssyd but he hyre nold lete."
[232] Brown, 1892-1893, Pickering, 2718-2720.

Wyth singular chershyng of her loue, Messye,
Both in hys lyuyng & in hys passyoun,
And fro*m* deth to lyf aftyr hys resurreccyoun.[233]

The gospels are used here, in their entirety, as a justification for Mary Magdalene as Bokenham has presented her—someone with a singular cherishing of the Messiah in life, at his death, and at his resurrection.

This understanding of the particular relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ preserves the singular nature of *apostola apostolorum*, but broadens it to the entirety of their relationship rather than concentrating on the particular moment of Mary Magdalene's informing the apostles of his resurrection. Bokenham can do this without having to justify it by citing an authority because the term is not in universal usage. As mentioned earlier, it is missing from analogous texts and there appears to be some anxiety regarding how the phrase is used. Bokenham can replace the phrase at this point without risking undermining his signification of the saint due to this anxiety. In this stanza, stressing the special relationship between the two, he is building his case for her as *apostelesse* without having to acknowledge the limitations of *apostolorum*.

As we have seen from the previous pages, however, it is not only Mary Magdalene's cherishing of Christ that Bokenham has presented. He has also presented

[233] Ibid. 5724-5730. AL:

Lo thus and many anthyr wyse
As in the gospel men mouun aspye
And mythe betyr than I now kan deuyse
Preuylegyd was thys blyssyd Marie
Wyth singular chershyng of hyre loue Messe
Both in hys lyuyng and in hys passyoun
And fro deth to lyue in hys resurreccyoun.

the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ as singularly important by controlling the presentation of events in such a way as to fashion her as a particularly efficacious exemplar. Other individuals who had their own relationships with Christ—Lazarus and Martha—have aspects of their relationships with Christ given to the Magdalene by Bokenham.

During this part of the "lyf," Bokenham has also shown his tendency to use appeals to authority to control possible critique of his signification of Mary Magdalene. Time and again, he has referred either to John, Luke or Jacobus when making his points, even when the way he is presenting the saint does not fit with the way in which she is presented in the source text. In this way, as we have also seen him do in the prologue, he is able to prevent punctualization of the sign that is Mary Magdalene by appealing to an even greater sign—that of conceptual scripture.

Transitioning Stanzas

Rather than moving immediately into the legendary material, as Jacobus does, Bokenham uses two stanzas as a transition to indicate that he has completed the material based on the conceptual scripture and is now moving into material wholly taken from the *Legenda.* He does so first by recognizing his hypotext, indicating that he will tell the "remnaunht" of the life "Lych as Ianue*n*ce doth descry" as long as "grace my wyt & my pe*nn*e do gye" and God sees fit to allow him to live long enough to complete it.[234]

[234] Ibid., 5733-5735. AL: "remnaunt", "Lych as Ianue*n*ce yt doth discrye", "grace my wyt and my penne do gye."

The next stanza is different based on the particular manuscript in which the poem appears. While both beseech Mary Magdalene "wyth hert entere" to "Purchase me g*rac*e bettyr lyf to lede, / Than I do yet" in Arundel 327 the second portion of the stanza asks the saint to "þat lady spede / In all hyr werkys & get hyr blysse / Wych of þis wrytyng cause p*r*incypal ysse," while the Abbotsford *Legenda* renders the lines as "evere me spede / In all my werkys and gete me blys / Whan I hens pace wyche nevere shal mys."[235]

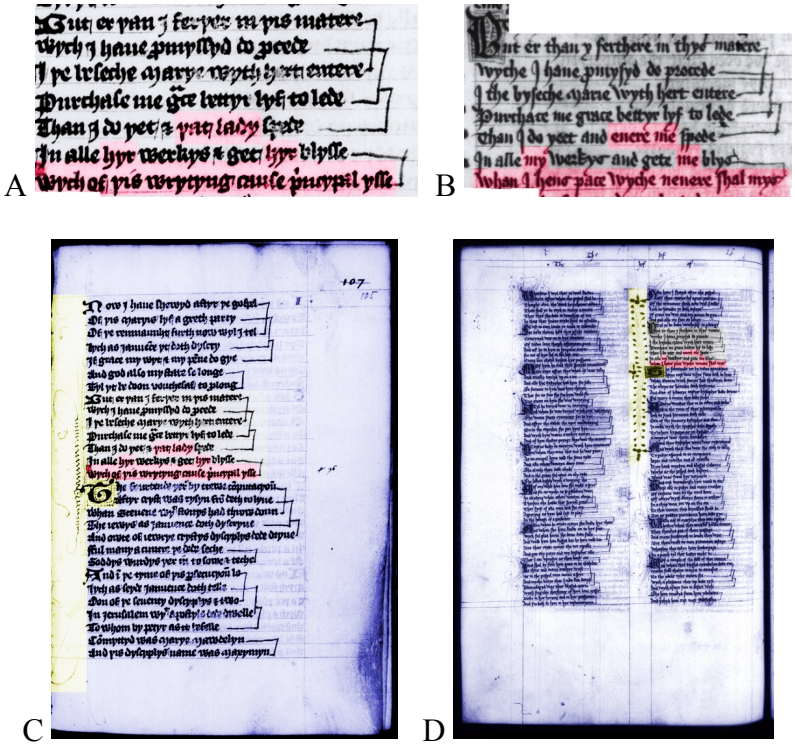


Figure 3.8: two versions of the transitional stanza. A: the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (BL Arundel 327). B: the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea* (Abbotsford B.3.1). The words that have been changed are colored in red. C: fol. 105r of Arundel 327 in context. D: fol. 137v. of the Abbotsford *Legenda* in context. Also note the flourishing of the initial beginning the Legendary portion of the "lyf," highlighted in yellow in both images.

[235] Ibid., 5740-5742, 5742-5744. AL: "wyth hert entere / Purchace me grace bettyr lyf to lede / Than I do yeet."

This change is unsurprising. The two versions merely reflect whether or not Isobel Bouchier is considered the patroness of the text. However, the final line of both is interesting, because it introduces either a thread regarding Mary Magdalene's intercession at the hour of death or an acknowledgment of Bouchier's patronage. The version in the Abbotsford *Legenda*, which calls for Mary Magdalene to intercede for Bokenham both in his life and at his death, follows a fairly standard request. The one in Arundel 327, however, asks only that Mary Magdalene help Bokenham to live a better life than he currently does, and in shifting the second part of the request to Bouchier removes any direct reference to death, leaving it as an undifferentiated "blysse."

Much like the differences in the prologue, this moment is worth remembering when we come to the prolocutory. For now, however, it is enough to note that this is serving as a truncated prologue to the second half of the "lyf," dealing with the legendary material, and both versions of the manuscript reflect this, decorating the initial of the first stanza of the legendary material with flourishes and extra penwork, as well as leaves and gilding of both the initial and the berries in the case of the Abbotsford *Legenda*. Moreover, in both cases the scribe has broken the pattern of initials by making the two-line initial drop down onto the next line rather than rise up into the line prior. This is a conscious decision to mark the difference between the scriptural and legendary material, and suggests that the approach to both elements is different. This is borne out, as we will see, in how Bokenham approaches the use of Jacobus in the legendary material.

The Legendary Material

In the portion of the "lyf" based on conceptual scripture, Bokenham spends a significant amount of time discussing the nature of Mary Magdalene as she goes through the events that change her from sinner, to redeemed penitent, to singular exemplar and example for others. He does this by carefully manipulating how and when he calls to an authority, explaining where he is getting his information from when it is of use to him and remaining quiet or de-emphasizing those sources when it is not. He also shows through the treatment of the other individuals in this portion of the narrative—Lazarus, Martha, and Christ himself—that his intent in doing this work is to fashion Mary Magdalene as the aforementioned exemplar rather than to include her in a more comprehensive discussion of salvation history. He removes elements from the narrative, most strikingly, the discussion of the "redemption and the life," to make events center as much on Mary Magdalene as he possibly can.

Bokenham is able to do this because he is significantly expanding on his hypotext when he discusses the scriptural material. What took up a twelfth of Jacobus' account becomes well over a third of Bokenham's. Since he expands on the material so much, he is better able to decide when and how to use Jacobus and his other sources. He can therefore shape the direction of the work in ways that his audience will accept but will also enable him to achieve his goals regarding the saint.

In the legendary material, Bokenham does not have this luxury. Instead, he stays very close to the hypotext, only changing the narrative slightly. In fact, Karen Winstead suggests that this is a conscious choice, noting that Bokenham "ostentatiously divides his

narrative into two parts, concluding the story of Mary the penitent follower of Christ by saying it is 'after þe gospel' and announcing the remainder of the narrative as 'lych as Ianuence yt doth dyscry.'" According to her, his purpose in doing this is to remind "readers that the story about the preaching saint is *not* in the Gospel but that it is in no way his invention; he also obliquely invites readers to compare the authority of Gospel and 'Ianuence.'"[236] Winstead further argues that Bokenham is "weary of his task," adopting the position that "telling the story of a female preacher was not his idea."[237] While I will return to the last point in the my discussion of the "prolocutory" section, I believe that Winstead is reading too much into what I have shown to be a function of the the structure of the hypotext. Jacobus naturally creates a division between the scriptural and legendary material, and Bokenham is following it. If he truly was uncomfortable with the presentation of Mary Magdalene as a preaching figure, I do not believe he would have taken the time to build her up as an exemplar in the way he does. Moreover, he holds more closely to the hypotext in the legendary section, which he would not do if his goal was to downplay Mary Magdalene's role as preacher. Instead, I believe the distinction made between the Gospels in the scriptural section and Jacobus in the legendary better serves as an example of how Bokenham uses the differences between authorities in shaping Mary Magdalene.

Bokenham does, however, make some changes to Jacobus which should be noted. The first significant change in the text occurs where the "prynce & hys wyf" go to

[236] Winstead, 71.
[237] Ibid.

the temple in order to "sacryfyse to dyane" in order to bring about the conception of a child.[238] In Jacobus' version, the mention of the child does not happen until Mary Magdalene has visited the rulers three times and they have sent for her. The *Gilte Legende*, unsurprisingly, follows this, as does Caxton's version. The two versions of the *South English Legendary* differ both from Jacobus and Bokenham as well as from each other. Both versions state that the people of Marseilles are Saracens, reading the idol-worship of Jacobus' text for Islam, the later *South English Legendary* recounts that the sacrifice is specifically in order to conceive a child, as Bokenham does, while the early *South English Legendary* states that they were there with their retinue and does not mention either specifically that they are there to sacrifice or that the sacrifice is in order to conceive a child.[239]

Bokenham's change, then, appears to be representative of a change in the *vita* that is not taken directly from Jacobus but which is reflected in the *South English Legendary*. Interestingly, both versions of the *South English Legendary* have extensive speeches by Mary Magdalene that Bokenham could have used to bolster his fashioning of the saint, but it is possible that even if he were aware of them he would have chosen not to include them in order to avoid any possible conflict with religious authorities. By sticking to Jacobus in that sense, but including the missing motivation for the rulers of Marseilles to visit the temple, Bokenham picks the path that allows him to argue that he is simply translating Jacobus and including a particular element he missed. That element,

[238] Bokenham, 5802-5804. AL: "p*re*nce and hys wyf", "sacrificyn to dyane."
[239] D'Evelyn, 79-80, Horstmann 227-230.

however, is something that is part of the network surrounding the saint at the time he is writing, that has the mark of a traditional part of her *vita,* and which is therefore non-problematic.

While it is not strictly an addition to or subtraction from the narrative as Jacobus provides it, another change that reflects Bokenham's construction of Mary Magdalene as a sign occurs when the prince and his wife are about to leave to go on pilgrimage. Mary Magdalene has just marked their shoulders with the sign of the cross to ward against the devil—itself a sign of Mary Magdalene's particular efficacy against devilish interference, albeit one that is in Jacobus as well—when Bokenham renders Jacobus' "custodia" as "gouernau*n*ce." "Gouernance" does not mean ownership or control of goods so much as it means administrative control. The closest definition that does not have this administrative function, definition three in the Middle English Dictionary,[240] still has as an element a sense of guardianship, or a sense of being under their personal authority. So Bokenham is not simply saying that Mary Magdalene is taking care of their goods while they are on pilgrimage—instead, he is extrapolating from Jacobus' words and his own development of Mary Magdalene as an aristocratic figure to show that she is somebody who is worthy to be in charge of the country while the prince and his wife are away. That signification of her from the very first part of the scriptural material has returned here after an absence to strengthen Jacobus' words regarding her safekeeping of "al þat þei haddyn:"[241] the land and people of Marsielles.

[240] *MED.*"Governance." 3. Accessed 03-10-2013.
[241] Bokenham, 5937. AL: "Al that they haddyn."

I have argued throughout the discussion of the scriptural material that Bokenham's agenda in translating Jacobus as he does is to fashion Mary Magdalene as a singular exemplar, and leaving it unambiguous as to whether she controls Marseilles during their trip continues to accomplish this. Doing so through the use of the word "gouernaunce", with its connotations of overlordship, allows Bokenham to stress Mary Magdalene's aristocratic credentials without allowing those credentials to overshadow and punctualize the religious figure that she has become through his careful development of her in the earlier, scripturally-based material. There is another point in the narrative that he has to include if he is to avoid breaking the black box he has created for Mary Magdalene—the moment of the prince's doubt, Peter's comforting of him, and the return of princess.

In Jacobus, when the princess dies in childbirth, the prince, in his anguish, tries to figure out what he should do. In Bokenham, this cry is voiced—in a reversal of Mary Magdalene's moment of confession—and rather than asking what he is to do, he asks "why dye not I?"[242] This is a moment of doubt for the prince in both versions, but in Bokenham makes sure that the moment of doubt is externalized. Moreover, after the prince has left his dead wife and infant son on a hill, he gives a speech, bitterly bemoaning the fact of his wife's death, his son's impending starvation, and questioning Mary Magdalene and her god. This questioning and futher doubt is in both texts, but Bokenham makes two omissions that lessen any possibility of blame falling on Mary Magdalene.

[242] Ibid., 5965. AL: "why dede not I."

Jacobus has the prince state:

> O Maria Magdalena, cur ad perditionis et miserie mee cumulum Marsilie partibus appliciuisti? Cur infelix admonition tua hoc iter arripui? Petistine dominum ut mulier mea hac de causa conciperet, ut periret? Ecce enim concepit et pariendo mortem subiit; conceptumque est natum ut pereat, cum non sit qui enutriat. Ecce qua prece tua obtinui! Tibi cui mea Omnia commendaui deoque tuo commendo: si potens est, memor sit anime matris et prece tua misereatur ne pereat natus.[243]
>
> [O Mary Magdalene, you brought ruin upon me when you landed at Marseilles! Unhappy me, that on your advice I set out on this journey! Did you not pray to God that my wife might conceive? Conceive she did, and suffered death giving birth, and the child she conceived was born only to die because there is no one to nurse him. Behold, this is what your prayer obtained for me. I commended my all to you and do commend me to your God. If it be in your power, be mindful of the mother's soul, and by your prayer take pity on the child and spare its life.]

In comparison, Bokenham translates this as:

> O Mary Mawdelyne, to my p*er*dycyoun
> And to encres of my wrecchydnesse
> To Marcyle cu*n*tre why dedyst þou com,
> Me for to puttyn i*n* swych dystresse?
> Askyd þou of þi goddys goodnesse
> For þis skyl a chylde on-to my wyf,
> That þus þei bothe shuld lesy*n* her lyf?
> I woot neuer*e*; but þis wot I wele,
> That she deed is as I now se
> And so shal þe chyld i*n* ful short seel,
> For he nowt hath wy*th* fostryd to be.
> Nertheless, syth I hy*m* had by the,
> Lych as I haue doo al my noþhir þing,
> I co*m*mytte he*m* to þine & þi goddys kepyng.

[243] Jacobus 94-101.

And yf he be myhty, as þou dost teche,
The modrys soule he haue i*n* hys memory ;
And thorgh þine p*re*yers I louly beseche,
That þe chyld not p*er*ysh, show he m*er*cy.[244]

While Bokenham's rendering of the prince's moment of doubt is every bit as strong in its condemnation of Mary Magdalene as Jacobus', he leaves out any sort of translation of the phrases "Cur infelix admonition tua hoc iter arripui" and "Ecce qua prece tua obtinui." He thus removes any possibility of the Magdalene's being to blame for the death of the queen. The speech cannot be removed entirely—it is important as the prince's moment of doubt while he travels on his pilgrimage and would be remarked upon if it was missing—but he does lessen any possible intimation that Mary Magdalene is less than perfect.

A similar move, intended to bolster the status of the saint, occurs when the prince finally arrives in Jerusalem and meets Peter. In Jacobus' text, Peter comforts the prince

[244] Bokenham, 5996-6014. AL:

O Marye Maudelyn to my p*er*dycioun
And to the encres of my wrecchydnesse
To marsile cuntre why dedyst thou com
Me fer to puttyn in swych distresse
Askyddyst thou of thy goddys goodnesse
Ffor thys skyl a child on to my wyf
That thus they both shulde lese here lyf
I wot neuere but thys woot I weel
That she deed ys as I now see
And so shal the child in ful short seel
Ffor he nouht hath wyth festryd to be
Nerthles syth I hym had by the
Lych as I haue don al myn othyr thing
I co*m*mytte hym to thyn and thy goddys kepyng
And yf he be myhty as thow doost teche
The modrys soule he haue in hys memorye
And thorght thy preyrs I louly byseche
That the child not p*er*yssh, shewe he mercy.

by saying "potens est enim dominus cui uult dona dare, data auferre, ablata restituere et merorem tuum in guadium commutare"[245] ["It is in the Lord's power to give gifts to whom he will, to take away what was given, to restore what was taken away, and to turn your grief into joy"]. In Bokenham, however, this is rendered as "god is strong ynow þem both to kepe."[246] Peter's meeting the prince and comforting him is an important element of the narrative, as it serves as an introduction and presents Peter's credentials prior to his taking the prince on his pilgrimage.

Moreover, in a text where Mary Magdalene is being presented as a female preacher—something not allowed by the Church and connected to the ideas of the Lollard heresy in fifteenth century England—having Peter there serves as a connection to the larger Church and proper orthodoxy. It is for this reason that Mary Magdalene stresses that she is strengthened by Peter in Jacobus' original text. However, Bokenham does not want to give any biblical figure other than the Magdalene, save perhaps Christ, focus in his version of the *vita.* To render the entire phrase would detract from the special intercessionary nature of Mary Magdalene in the work. By rendering the phrase as he does, he leaves the sense of things without making Peter an authority on the level of Mary Magdalene. This is further reinforced when Peter simply leads the prince on pilgrimage, instead of giving him instruction in the faith as Jacobus has him do. Instead,

[245] Jacobus, 107.
[246] Bokenham, 6031. AL: "god ys strong I now hem both to kepe."

Bokenham mentions that the prince learned in the faith diligently, without mentioning who instructed him in that faith.[247]

After having left Jerusalem and finding his son miraculously alive on the rock where he left his wife, the prince makes a request to Mary Magdalene for his wife to be alive. In Jacobus, the request is fairly simple: the prince mentions he is happy, but would be happier if his wife were alive and able to return with him. He then goes on to suggest that he believes that, through her prayers, Mary Magdalene could make this happen. In Bokenham, conversely, we begin the request with the acknowledgement of Mary Magdalene's power. He does this by stating "weel hast þou shewyd, blyssyd lady, her / That g*ra*ce fer passyth naturys power"[248] in an echo of Mary Magdalene's position as a figure of singular grace in the prologue and scriptural material. Then, in the reverse of how Jacobus structures the text, he states that he would be happy should his wife return to life, before making the specific request of the saint.

This request is rewarded, with the princess awakening speaking of Mary Magdalene's "g*ra*ce & cheryte," again attributes that we saw mentioned in Bokenham's construction of her in the prologue and scriptural material.[249] Despite the shifting of the order of events in the prince's speech, Bokenham does not omit anything from these speeches and by the choice of words adds somewhat to them. Since these two speeches are to the credit of Mary Magdalene as an exemplary figure, there is no need for Bokenham to soften them. However, adding any more might cause people to question

[247] Bokenham, 6032-6040.
[248] Ibid., 6086-6087. AL: "weel hast thou shewyd blyssyd lady her / That grace fer passyth naturs pouer."
[249] Ibid., 6103. AL: "thorgh thy grace and through thy chyrite."

his translation, so instead he uses word choice to echo the scriptural material and the prologue, where he had more ability to model the saint as he chose, reminding the reader that those aspects of the saint apply in this context as well.

Upon finding his wife and child well, the prince returns to Marseilles. Maxamin and Lazarus suddenly reappear in the text, with the latter made bishop of Marseilles and the former, after "Blyssyd Mawdelyn & hir co*m*pany" convert the city of Aguens, made bishop there.[250] This ends the apostolic portion of Bokenham's vita, as at this point Mary Magdalene goes off on her hermitage into the wilderness.

While this ends the major changes regarding Mary Magdalene in the legendary material, there are particular moments in the rest of the text that are worth mentioning before moving on to the verses occurring after the legendary material in both texts. First, when Mary Magdalene speaks to the unnamed priest and describes herself, she does so both by referring to "þe gospel," as she does in Jacobus, and also specifically to the book of Luke, which Bokenham used primarily in his material regarding the anointing. Bokenham is using the saint's speech, itself referencing an authority, as a way to authorize his own text regarding the saint that refers to that authority.

Second, and more importantly to our discussion of Mary Magdalene not only as a sign but as an *apostelesse*, Bokenham refers to her as such twice in the text. After her death, where Jacobus simply refers to her body as "sanctissimum corpus,"[251] Bokenham

[250] Bokenham 6145-6146. In Jacobus' text, the city the company converts is Aix, not Aguens. Bokenham may not have been familiar with the Latin for Aix, Aquensem, and thus translated it as Aguens.
[251] Jacobus, 160.

refers to "The body […] of þe apostelesse Marye Mawdelyn."[252] This use of the term for the first time (it will be repeated in the following two stanzas, but those are not part the narrative of the "lyf"), without the qualifying genitive, reveals that this has been the entirety of Bokenham's program in building the saint up over the course of the text. By using what he was given by Jacobus, and presenting carefully manipulated word choice, he is able to shift the signification of the saint. Moreover, where he has greater leeway and the ability to call upon authorities, he does so in ways that reduce the importance of ancillary figures in her *vita*, including Saint Peter, her siblings, and arguably Christ himself.

This final stanza of the narrative, revealing her as *apostelesse*, ends the *vita* as its analogues do in the *South English Legendary*. There are two more stanzas to the work, both of which include the term *apostelesse* in a series of increasingly important formulations that mirror how Bokenham has built up the person of Mary Magdalene over the course of the work. The final stanza of the *vita* is a prayer for Mary Magdalene, as "glorious apostolesse," to protect and intercede on behalf of her servants on earth, to purchase remission of their sins, and to bring them to the joys of heaven upon their death. The penultimate stanza, while still referring to Mary Magdalene as "holy apostelesse," has a different goal in mind and will help to introduce our discussion of the prolocutory and the political, rather than religious, dimensions of this work's production.[253]

[252] Bokenham, 6292-6293. AL:"The body […] of the apostelesse Mary maudelyn."
[253] Bokenham, 6305, 6301.

Bokenham leaves out most of the extra material regarding Mary Magdalene's miracles that Jacobus includes and which the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton, as more faithful translations, provide as well. One reason for this may be, as Horobin suggests, an impulse to downplay the miraculous in the development of the *vitae* in the *Legendys*. However, some of these accounts are different versions of the Magdalene's *vita*—artifacts of the consolidation of the twelfth century that Jacobus keeps in order to shield his own construction of the saint. Bokenham does not need these, and moreover leaving them in place jeopardizes the careful work of building up Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* he has done. After all, the story of Mary Magdalene as the estranged wife of Saint John the Evangelist, whoring it up through the town in revenge for Christ's calling her husband away at the altar, does not do the sort of work that Bokenham wishes it to, even if Jacobus decried it as false.[254]

The only one of the accounts of Mary Magdalene past her death that Bokenham does include is the translation of her relics from Aix to Vézelay. In Jacobus' account, Gerard, duke of Burgundy, gives away his wealth to the poor and builds the monestary at Vézelay. He sends a monk to Aix to bring back Mary Magdalene's relics, but that monk finds the city razed by Muslim forces. By chance he discovers the sarcophagus containing the body of Mary Magdalene, with images of her *vita* carved on the outside. Breaking into the sarcophagus, he gathers the relics and carries them to his inn. That night, Mary Magdalene appears to him, telling him not to be afraid, and to take her body back to Vézelay. Upon their arrival, they find they cannot move another step until the

[254] Jacobus, 182-187.

abbot and monks come, in procession, to receive the relics. None of this is in Bokenham's version. Instead, he notes that in "þe yer*e* of g*ra*ce / On seuen hu*n*dryd ran & fourty & nyne" Mary Magdalene's body was translated to "vizelyac" and placed in a shrine by "oon clepyd Gyrard, a lord i*n* burgu*n*dye." He then finishes the stanza by stating that she lies there to this day.[255]

As evidenced by his careful following of Jacobus in the legendary portion of the *vita*, Bokenham was very capable of translating the story as it was written in the *Legenda Aurea*. That he did not suggests that he had little interest in the material after the narrative of Mary Magdalene's life—a disinterest that the analogue in the *South English Legendary* shows was not his alone. However, he felt it necessary to include this specific event, and it is with that in mind that I will now turn to the prolocutory and the positioning of Mary Magdalene in the politics of the mid-fifteenth century.

The Prolocutory

In discussing Bokenham's construction of Mary Magdalene's signification, the last sections have dealt with two texts in tandem: Arundel 327, which is the manuscript used in scholarly editions of the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, and the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea*, discovered in 2004 to actually be an Englished version of the *Legenda Aurea* including many of Bokenham's legends.

The lack of the "prolocutory" section in this newfound work, when combined with its likely provenance as belonging to Cicely Neville, the wife of Richard of York,

[255] Bokenham, 6298-6304. AL: "the ye yer of g*ra*ce / On seuene hundryd ran and fourteen and nyne", "vicelac," "oon clepyd Girard*us* a lord in Burgu*n*dye."

bring into question what exactly the circumstances and goals of the writing of the Mary Magdalene *vita* were. While the religious aspect—the expansion of Mary Magdalene's role as an exemplar and the careful positioning of her signification in order to achieve this goal—are without question, the reasons for such a positioning of the saint in the larger social and political spheres are worth considering.

I believe that the "prolocutory" does more than just lay out the circumstances of the *vita's* composition. It does deal with the social and political aspects of its composition, but it also sets Christ up as a figure of grace. That grace is transferred, in turn, to the person of Mary Magdalene, who is then directly addressed in the type of introductory prayer seen in the transitional stanzas between the two sections of the "lyf." In analyzing the ways that Bokenham signifies Mary Magdalene as a figure of grace within a specifically Yorkist context, I will look at the content of the Prolocutory before developing theories regarding the connection between Bockenham and the House of York, the positioning of Mary Magdalene within the Abbotsford *Legenda* as a material object, and the possible reasons why the mention of Vézelay remains when all the other extra-legendary material has been removed.

The Text

In the opening lines of the prolocutory, Bokenham begins by telling us that the events of the prolocutory occur during "the year of g*ra*ce […] A thowsand, fourhu*n*dryd, fourty & fyue."[256] By selecting this phrase rather than "the year of our lord," he introduces a term that will appear again and again in connection with Mary Magdalene

[256] Ibid., 4981-4982.

in the "prologue" and "lyf." He then goes on, after a lengthy digression that is evocative of the opening language of the Prologue of the *Canturbury Tales,* to explain that he was with Isabel Bouchier, the countess of Eu and sister to Duke Richard of York, during Twelth Night at Clare castle. During these festivities they discussed "dyuers legendys" that Bokenham had Englished from the Latin of the *Legenda Aurea*. Bouchier explained to Bokenham that she wished him to write a legend of Mary Magdalene, for whom she had a "pure affecyoun" and "synguler deuocyoun.[257] This language, which echoes that which he uses when he describes Mary Magdalene's attitude towards Christ, creates a parallel that underscores the devotional purpose of the saint as he constructs her. By devoting herself to Mary Magdalene, Bouchier is beginning to show signs of similarity with the saint, and thus is likely to be saved.

Moreover, it is at this point, in the mouth of Isobel Bouchier, that we have the only reference to Mary Magdalene as *apostola apostolorum*, rather than the unbounded *apostelesse* of the "lyf." She states the aforementioned singular devotion is "to þat holy wu*m*man wych, as I gesse / Is clepyd of apostyls þe apostyllesse."[258] This choice on Bokenham's part introduces the phrase not as his own as author, but rather as an assumed and accepted conception of the saint mentioned by his patron. That patron, furthermore, is the sister of one of the wealthiest magnates in England. This provides the same sort of shielding as the earlier claims to authority made in the "prologue" and "lyf," but does so with a still-living person rather than the written words of a dead

[257] Ibid., 5040, 5065, 5066.
[258] Ibid., 5067-5068.

author. Putting the bounded phrase, rather than the freer *apostelesse*, in the mouth of Bouchier allows Bokenham to use the social authority of his patroness in his signification of the saint while protecting her from any possible backlash. It is only after the careful construction of Mary Magdalene as a figure of exemplarity through the rest of the work that Bokenham is free to refer to her as an *apostelesse* unbound by any genitive identifier, at a point where it is unlikely to affect Isobel Bouchier's religious or social standing.

The lack of this section in the Abbotsford *Legenda*, combined with the inclusion of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* at the end of the "lyf," also suggests that Bokenham was not as concerned about Mary Magdalene's status as preacher as Winstead suggests. The easiest way to limit Mary Magdalene's efficacy as a exemplary figure – and more importantly, as a preacher – is to stress the *apostolorum* portion of the *apostola apostolorum* signification of her as a saint. If Bokenham was as uncomfortable with the idea of Mary Magdalene's preaching as Winstead considers him to be, it seems likely to me that he would have retained the genitive, keeping Mary Magdalene apostle of the apostles, rather than naming her *apostelesse*. Instead, I think it is more likely that Bokenham was always "more creative in his selection and use of sources"—as I have shown in the scriptural section.[259] Since Bokenham does make this choice, it seems to me that what Winstead argues is an evolution in Bokenham's thought is instead the result of differing environments of composition for the versions of Mary Magdalene's *vita* in Arundel 327 and the Abbotsford *Legenda.*

[259] Winstead, 84-85.

Similarly, what Winstead notes as a hesitancy to take on the commission from Bouchier is, I believe, merely the questioning of his poetic abilities that is a commonplace of fifteenth-century authorship. The commonplace is evoked here partially to maintain a stance of humility, and to explain why he agrees to compose the work only after completing a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Bouchier accepts this, and Bokenham then explains to the reader that he has made the pilgrimage and now will begin the work. Before he does so, however, he first makes a claim to authority, stating that Plato, whom St. Augustine called "The prynce […] of phylosofyrs alle," suggested that any work should be begun with a prayer to a "souveryn dyuynyte" to protect the work from error.[260]

The prayer itself is significantly longer than the introductory prayers for the other two sections, at one-hundred twenty lines. In it, Bokenham first reaffirms the singular but unified nature of the trinity before going into a description of the process of creation, describing the creation of the world, the animals, and finally man. In describing these actions, Bokenham does not mention any specific aspect of the trinity, trusting that the reader will understand that the reference to creation implies that he is speaking of God the Father. He reinforces this in the next section, where he speaks of the fall of man, who was "deceyuyd of hys enmy / Clepyd serpent, behemoth, or leuyathan" before mentioning the redemption, where "the seconde p*er*sone" redeems "Thorgh þi g*ra*ce &

[260] Bokenham, 5121, 5131.

þi mercy" mankind, reforming it "more meruelously / Than in þe beginning he formed fyrsy was."[261]

This section of the prayer is especially interesting because it is here that the central focus on Christ that is missing in the "lyf" resides. Christ is referred to as "ma*n*nys aduocat […] and medyatour" who has such great "cheryte" that he ransomed mankind with "al þe blood of hys body, / And wy*th* al þe blood of hys hert"[262] as well. Again, Bokenham is using similar language to that seen in the interactions between Christ and Mary Magdalene as well as between Mary Magdalene and the prince and princess of Marseilles. He is creating a common set of terms both legalistic and emotional that serve as signposts on the way to redemption, creating a particular emotional resonance that will carry through any time the word is repeated.

Moreover, the next section of the prayer states specifically that Christ is the one who can help Bokenham by setting Christ against a laundry list of gods and muses of classical antiquity. This choice on Bokenham's part makes the choiceof the prince and princess of Marseilles to leave the worship of Diana and cleave to Christ not an artifact of that particular moment in time, but instead part of an ongoing battle against temptation that carries through to his present day. His specific references—to Clio, Melpomene, Minerva, and Apollo—evoke different aspects of the secular career of a writer. In denying all of them, he is denying their ability to give him what he wants in the same way that the denial of Diana by the prince and princess of Marseilles is a denial

[261] Ibid., 5184-5185, 5191, 5188-5189.
[262] Ibid., 5194, 5208-5209.

of her purported ability to give them a child. It is through Christ, rather than through pagan gods, that his poetry occurs.

The concluding lines of the prayer reinforce that Bokenham's poetic gifts come to him through Christ, requesting that he "ku*m*ny*ng* may han suffycyently" in order to complete the translation in the service of Isobel Bouchier. He also states his specific goals in doing this: first, "To hyr goostly confourth in especyal," then to the comfort of all "wych in redyn shal," requesting that they "wynne / Fryst remyssyoun here of all her*e* sy*m*ne / Lych as Mary Mawdelyn dede purchase." Mary Magdalene's particular efficacy is mentioned directly at this point, and is reinforced further by suggesting that she can help mankind to come to heaven "þorgh grace."[263] Bokenham concludes the prayer by asking that each man say amen, for charity, which again makes the connection between charity, grace, and Mary Magdalene that runs throughout the "prologue" and "lyf."

Since the poem is laying the foundation for what will be the elaborate case for Mary Magdalene as exemplar, the question becomes why the specific section was removed from the Abbotsford *Legenda*. In the next section, I will address this issue by looking at the two texts in light of the specific political and social contexts at the time of their compositions.

The Proloctory Question

As I have mentioned previously, the "prolocutory" only appears in Arundel 327 and is entirely missing from the Abbotsford *Legenda*. Moreover, the discovery of this

[263] Ibid. 5249, 5255-5260. The last quotation is suggested by Horstmann, but I believe that he makes a good point when the rhyme scheme and general approach of Bokenham towards Mary Magdalene as a figure of grace is considered.

absence has lead to a tense debate regarding what the actual purpose for this version of the Magdalene's *vita* was, the circumstances of which have implications for how Mary Magdalene was utilized as a sign in the mid-fifteenth century and perhaps for why her role as an *apostelesse* increases throughout the century as a whole.

The two sides in this debate are represented most strongly by Simon Horobin, whom I have mentioned before in connection to the Abbotsford text, and Sheila Delany, who in her book *Impolitic Bodies* makes the case that in 1445 the House of York is already considering its dynastic possibilities not only in Spain, but in England as well. While the primary evidence she gives for this earlier date is Bokenham's likely translation of *De Consultu Stilchonis* (BL Add. 11814), as tangential evidence she mentions that the prolocutory develops the possible claim to the Castilian throne by Richard through a detailed geneology of his sister, Isabel Bouchier:

> In p*re*sence I was of þe lady bowser*e*
> Wych is also clepyd þe cou*n*tesse of hu
> Doun conueyid by þe same pedegru
> That þe duk of york is come, for she
> Hys sustyr is in egal degree,
> Aftyr þe duchesse of york clepyd Isabel,
> Hyr fadrys grau*n*htdam, [wych, soth to tel,]
> In spayn kyng Petrys dowtyr was,
> Wych wy*th* a-noþir systyr, so stood þe caas
> The royal tytle of spayne to englond broth
> And, for þe fyrste sustyr yssud noht
> But deyid baren, al stood in þe toþir,
> By whom þe ryht now to þe broþir
> Of seyd da[me] Isabell*e*, to seyn al a*n*d sum,
> The duk of york, syr Rychard, is come,

Wych god hym send, yf it be hys wyl.[264]

As Delany points out, however, this statement is erroneous, as Constanza (the "fyrste sustyr") bore two children to John of Gaunt. The second of these children, Juan II, ruled Castile during the time of this poem's composition, and his daughter Isabella is the famous Spanish queen who sent Columbus to the new world. Delaney then suggests that this statement is in place because at the point that Bokenham is writing Juan II has not had any children yet, and that in negotiating a possible marriage alliance with Charles VII of France, Richard hoped to utilize the Castilian connection to "sweeten the pot."[265]

As a counterpoint to this overtly political reading, Catherine Sanok notes that

> Bokenham has previously translated the lives of legendary kings and bishops of England, and Isabel, as an aristocratic woman whose brother could make a claim to the throne, might well have expected to identify with powerful native saints such as those who authorize aristocratic privilege and political power. But Bokenham defines her literary and devotional practices by sex, not class or national identity or some other social category. [Bouchier] stands in the prolocutory as an exemplary *female* reader, and her exclusive interest in female saints there confirms what the legendary as a whole tacitly argues: that women are interested in these narratives *as* women, that their reading is informed by their sex.[266]

This reading has much to recommend it. There is no reason to assume that women were not interested in reading about other women, and if Mary Magdalene's signification as

[264] Bokenham, 5004-5019.
[265] Delany, 130-132.
[266] Sanok, 52-53.

an exemplar can be read without regard to her gender, it cannot be ignored that gender is part of what is in the conflated set of signfiications that her exemplarity might represent. Her status as a woman is but one of many ways to approach that set, and the fact that she was initially limited by the *apostolorum* portion of her signification as *apostola apostolorum* is based on her gender. However, Sanok also makes too much of the idea that it is Bouchier, not Bokenham, that is setting the agenda regarding which saints are to be discussed in the *Legendys*. Since Bokenham has shown that he is more than willing to put words into Bouchier's mouth if necessary, the idea that the list of saints he presents in the "prolocutory" is Bouchier's and not his own can be brought into question.

Likewise, Horobin questions the focus of Delany and others in her camp on specifically political issues, proposing that to do so ignores the "substantial devotional and literary interests" of Bouchier and the circle of Yorkists surrounding her brother, many of whom are dedicatees in the *Legendys*.[267] However, most of Horobin's evidence comes after 1454, when Richard of York granted an alienation in mortmain of twelves acres of land to Clare Priory. As Catherine Turner Camp notes, prior to this date there is little indication that Richard was an active patron.[268] His claim to Clare came with his Mortimer inheritance, and the Mortimers had been indifferent to Clare. Her primary concern in noting this is to discuss how Clare priory represents itself to a potentially powerful patron through the use of Bokenham's poetry, and for this reason is worth bearing in mind while considering the respective camps of Delany and Horobin.

[267] Horobin, "Politics," 943-949.
[268] Camp, 257-284.

All sides of this debate are making their cases based primarily on the textual evidence of a single manuscript. Furthermore, the two versions of the text, depending on which is privileged, are both capable of serving multiple interests, as I have shown through my discussion of the "prologue" and "lyf." However, neither text exists in a vacuum; there is non textual evidence—the manuscript decoration, the suggested provenance of the Abbotsford *Legenda*, other examples of the connection between Mary Magdalene and the House of York, and the decoration of the Clopton Chapel at Holy Trinity, Long Melford—which suggest that while the firm connection that Delany makes may be more tenuous than originally thought, there is an ongoing connection between the cult of the saint and the House of York from the mid fifteenth-century. This connection, in turn, had implications for the cult of the saint and the dynastic ambitions of the House of York not only in England, but in Europe as well.

The first question to ask before discussing the interconnection of the manuscripts with patrons and the material culture of the period is for whom exactly the manuscript was written. There are no markers left indicating that the Abbotsford *Legenda* was created for a particular patron, but Horobin has provided convincing paleographic evidence that it was composed at Clare Priory.[269] Some changes in the content of the text, specifically changes in a reference to Lydgate to reflect his recent death, further elucidates that the Abbotsford Legenda was produced after Arundel 327. Horobin has posited a date no earlier than 1449 for the fabrication of the manuscript, which fits well with the production of the *Legendys* in 1447 and the date of composition of the life of

[269] Horobin, "Manuscript," 132-167.

Mary Magdalene after that night in 1445. In addition, considering the size of the manuscript and the historical connection between the House of York and Clare Priory, Horobin suggests that it was assembled as a presentation copy for the Duke of York, likely to be given to his wife, Cecily. Assuming that it is a presentation copy and that Horobin is correct in his suggestion that it was intended for Cicely of York, then the lives and biblical events the scribes and illuminators emphasized through decoration may give us some insight into the importance of Mary Magdalene to the House of York.

Unfortunately, the manuscript decoration of the Abbotsford *Legenda* has largely been lost to us, whether through the iconoclasm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or through the mania for collecting bits of illuminated decoration in the nineteenth. What we do have, however, can be equally illuminating when it comes to the question of how Mary Magdalene is connected to the manuscript. Often, decorated initials remain in the manuscript but historiated initials—those that might have included a picture of the saint—have been cut out. This was done in such a way as to leave as much of the actual text and margins available to readers as possible. In the case of Mary Magdalene, however, the lower margin of the last leaf and the entire left margin of the first leaf of the life have been removed, including the initial for the prologue.

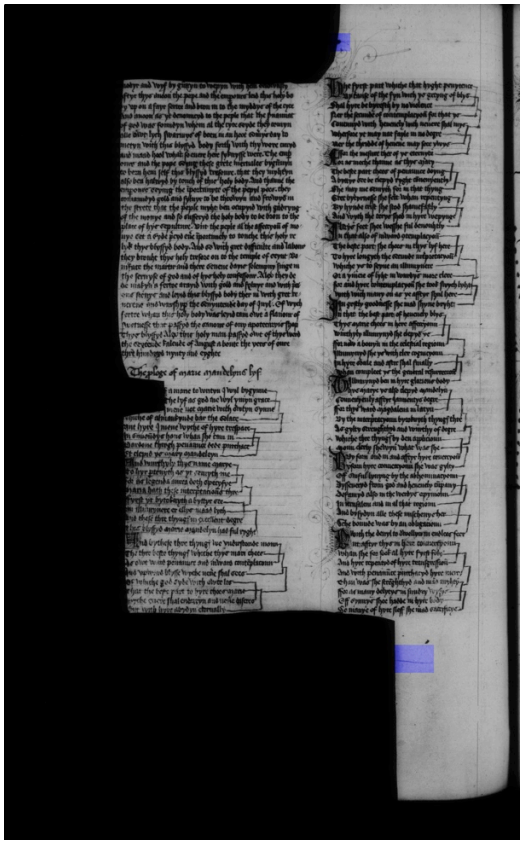
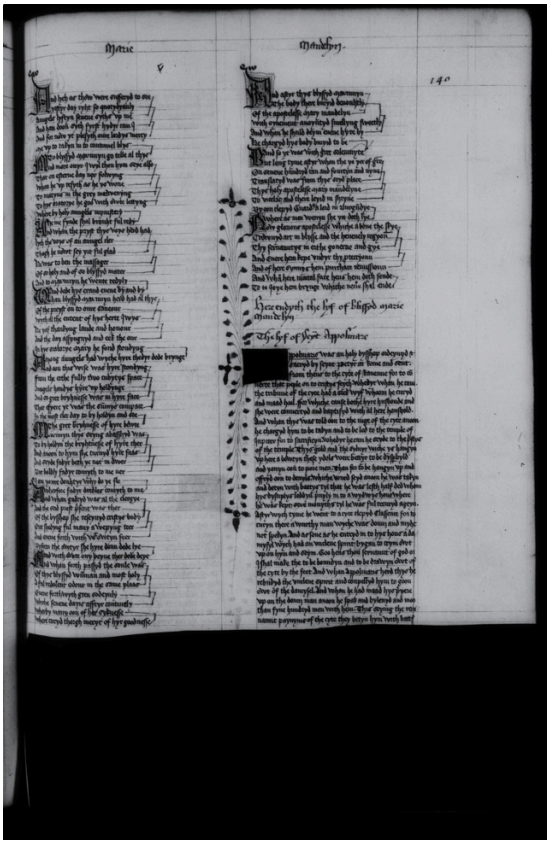
A  B 

Figure 3.9: evidence of decoration in the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea.* A: the excised border of fol. 135v, with remnants of decoration given a blue wash. B: fol. 140r, with the excised lower border and missing historiated initial.

While there are no indications of it on the last leaf, remnants of decoration do appear on the first—a green mark that may be part of an acanthus leaf at the top of and a penstroke at the bottom of the margins. This suggests that this particular life was once decorated on all three margins that are now lost. Such a level of marginal decoration only occurs in three other places in the manuscript as we currently have it—in the Annunciation of our

Lady, the life of John the Baptist, and folio 110r.[270] Furthermore, since the Life of John the Baptist starts in the second column, we still have a bit of the actual decoration present in the gutter between the two columns and in the margins themselves, hinting at the richness we might have expected in the Mary Magdalene marginalia.

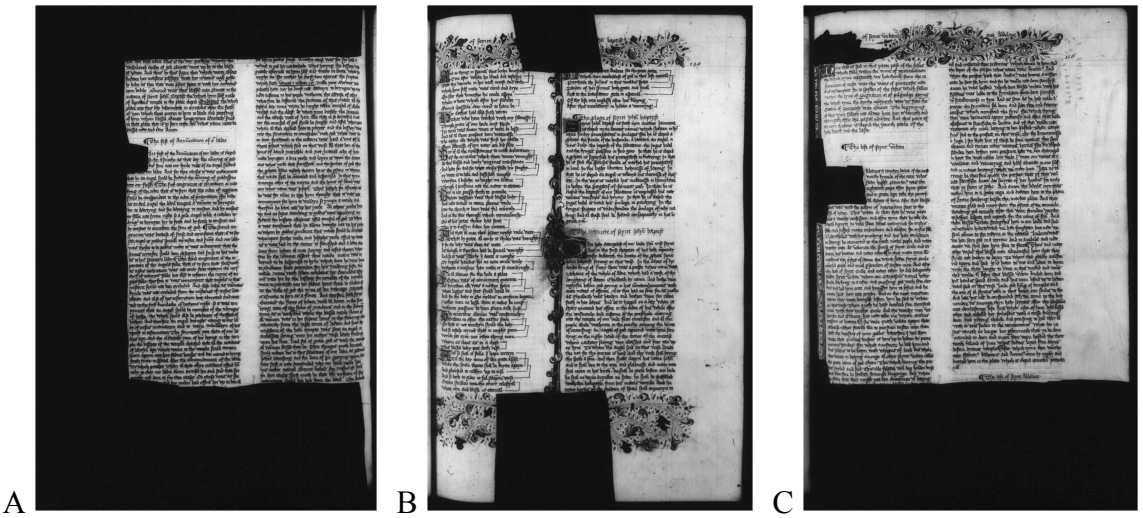


Figure 3.10: three examples of decoration in the Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea.* A: the excised border and historiated initial for the Annunciation of our Lady (fol. 80v). B: the excised material for the life of John the Baptist (fol. 120r.). C: the excised material for fol. 110r.

The annunciation and John the Baptist both serve as markers pointing the scripturally saavy audience towards the birth and earthly ministry of Christ, respectively. Likewise, Mary Magdalene completes the set of annunciatory significations by serving

[270] While the first two excisions are of decorative elements unquestionably related to the legend referred to in the text, the third either is connected to Saint Urban or to the introductory material that explains that these are saints whose feast days occur between Pentecost and Advent. Since the pattern of decoration for the introductory material in the other sections is not uniform, it is not entirely evident what prompted the decoration. However, Saint Urban is connected to Saint Cecelia, who is mentioned in the text of his Abbotsford *vita*, and it may be that in the absence of a Cecelia legend in a book meant for Cecily Neville Urban's legend was decorated instead. Additionally, the lower margin of folios 216 and 217, part of the "lyf of Seynt Winifred," have been removed but there is no indication of marginal decoration that might have been lost.

in her role as *apostola apostolorum.* Placing her at the same level as the other two figures reinforces the importance of this signification while making it part of a larger set of signs regarding the status of Christ—with the implication of the literal meaning of apostle inherent, if not overtly stated. This suggests that the intended audience of the Abbotsford *Legenda*—which I do believe to be Cicely of York—considered Mary Magdalene to have a similar, if not equivalent, level of importance as the other two figures. The likelihood that at the time of composition for the Abbotsford *Legenda* the cult of Mary Magdalene had adherents who would put her at the same level as John the Baptist, if not the Virgin Mary also suggests that the *Legenda,* despite having a female patroness, was not intended solely for women who wanted to read about female saints, as Sanok suggests regarding Bouchier and Arundel 327. Instead, it is intended as part of a set of significations regarding scriptural figures that considered closeness to Christ rather than gender of importance.

While in terms of lost decoration there is a visual equivalency among the three, the distinction between John the Baptist, the Virgin, and Mary Magdalene should still be made because the Virgin Mary has several items in the Abbotsford Legenda, whereas John the Baptist has two and Mary Magdalene has only a single item. So while visually there is an equivalency textually there is not. The visual element then supports Bokenham's textual agenda, creating a sense of equivalency by taking those visual elements that signify the importance of the Anunciation and the John the Baptist items and applying them to Mary Magdalene, without obviously inflating her importance through additional textual material. As we will see in the final section of this chapter,

Mary Magdalene as a visual sign would continue to be important to the house of York through the remainder of the fifteenth century.

Besides the decorative connection between the saints and the house of York, Cicely Neville also requests in her will that the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist protect her soul. Furthermore, in her bequests to the future Henry VIII, she leaves him "three tappets of arres oon of them of the life of St John Baptist another of Mary Maudeleyn and the thirde of the passion of our Lord and Saint George."[271] At the time of this bequest, Henry was the Duke of York, as his brother Arthur was the Prince of Wales. Cicely gave other fabric items produced at Arras, including a tapestry, to Arthur, but these three items in particular were reserved for Henry and no other bequest is mentioned. This evidence suggests that Mary Magdalene—at least in Cicely's eyes—had a particular connection to the House of York as a political entity, and that this connection carried through both the decorative elements of the book produced for her at Clare and the tapestries she bequeathed to the person she believed to be the future Duke of York.

Because of these multiple instances of connection between Yorkist ladies and the saint, it seems likely then there was a connection between the women of the House of York and the cult of Mary Magdalene, and that the Abbotsford Legenda was specifically appealing to that connection when the marginalia of Mary Magdalene's vita were created. This does not, however, address the larger question between the two camps of scholars: was Osbern Bokenham primarily a Yorkist partisan, and was the commission

[271] Neville, "Will."

of the Mary Magdalene in part to help justify Richard of York's claims to the English throne?

The Social Agenda

The intention of Bokenham's prolocutory was to help secure a throne for the House of York, but not necessarily the throne of England. At the time that Bokenham is writing his life of Mary Magdalene, recent hostilities between Burgundy and England had only been concluded by a truce, negotiated by York and the Duchess of Burgundy (herself related to the Lancastrian line), which was just over two years old.[272] The truce negotiations had, at one point, involved the possible marriage of the daughter of the count of Armagnac to Henry VI. However, these negotiations bore no fruit, but "had pointed to a possible avenue of foreign policy which might keep the English in Gascony and Normandy."[273] Marriage, then, might be a way to stabilize the borders between the three countries in a way that was advantageous to England. Moreover, the King of France had publically repudiated Burgundy and its allies in the wake of this, creating a new opportunity for England to leverage France against the Burgundian alliance.

Thus, on April 18th, 1445—a little over three months after the 1445 Twelfth Night where Bokenham agrees to undertake the Mary Magdalene life—Richard of York wrote to Charles VII of France suggesting that the Princess Madeleine marry his son Edward. Charles was interested in the marriage, but suggested instead that his daughter Joanne might be more suitable. The idea of a marriage had been floating around since

[272] Johnson, 45; Plantagenet.
[273] Johnson, 44.

the Duke of Suffolk's second embassy to the French, and would have very much been on the mind of the English court at the time of the composition of the "prolocutory." If the marriage between Edward and a daughter of Charles VII had succeeded, the marriage between Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou five days later would have resulted in stronger Plantagenet claims in France. This is what both Delany and Camp suggest for their reason that the "prolocutory" is written, and it is these specific political events that Horobin is discounting in favor of his social and religious approach to patronage.

However, as Camp notes, the lack of firm connection between Clare priory and the House of York, as well as York's political responsibilities in France, make such a social and religious circle unlikely at the point of composition. Rather, it seems more likely that both the Mary Magdalene materials and Bokenham's translation of *De consulatu Stilichonis* were intended as showpieces to indicate to Richard, through the person of his sister, the importance and usefulness of Clare priory and the reasons why his active patronage would be poltically, as well as religiously and socially, useful to him.[274]

As is evidenced by the granting of a letter of confraternity to Katherine Howard, Bokenham and Clare Priory were sufficiently politically connected to the gentry and nobility of England to be aware of the political machinations occurring both at court and on the continent. Furthermore, Bokenham may have been aware that Richard and Cicely's daughter, Anne, was approaching marriageable age and that Philip of Burgundy's son Charles was of roughly similar age. If, as is accepted by both camps,

[274] Camp, 328-334.

Clare priory is connected with the House of York and *De consulatu Stilichonis* is intended to be a "manual for princes" for Richard of York, Bokenham may be specifically drawing connections between the House of York and Burgundy in the production of his life of Mary Magdalene.

This connection is underscored by Bokenham's reference to the translation of Mary Magdalene's relics to Vézelay—the only extra-legendary element remaining from the original text in Jacobus, a bit of hagiography that was especially important to the Burgundian sense of identity, and an element which had been brought into recent doubt. Moreover, the reference to Isobel herself as the Countess of Eu—a continental title for a land her husband's father held for only a year—rather than merely as Lady or Vicountess Bouchier would only reinforce the Yorkist connections to continental, rather than English, holdings.

If the purpose of the prolocutory was in support of a Yorkist union with either the French or Burgundians, it is possible that the by the time the Abbotsford *Legenda* was completed in 1449 the purpose of the prolocutory was long past. Yorkist marriage negotiations with Armagnac had never born fruit, Henry VI had married Margaret of Anjou, Philip the Good had married his son Charles to Isabel of Bourbon, and Anne herself had been married to Henry de Holand, Duke of Exeter for two years. When combined with the fact that, as Horobin notes, a dedicatory section would be ill-suited for a manuscript intended to be offered as a whole to Cicely Neville, it is easy to imagine scribes leaving that section out. It had served its intended purpose during the time of its composition, and it was not needed anymore. Such an omission, though, should not be

taken to mean that Bokenham or the cult of Mary Magdalene in East Anglia were not associated with the House of York, or that the prolocutory as a piece of writing did not bear later fruit.

The Reading Circle and Material Culture

All of the dedicatees in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (save John and Isabel Hunt, for whom we have no information) are affiliated in some way to the House of York, either directly as members of Duke Richard's military administration in France or obliquely as children of the aforementioned military men and gentry around Viscount Bouchier's holdings in Clare. Furthermore one of Bokenham's patrons, Elizabeth de Vere—who is mentioned directly in the prolocutory—had connections with the Fastolfes, who were also linked to Richard of York through military service.

This extant circle of readers surrounding Bokenham, all allied in some way to the House of York, is the reason why the Clopton chantry chapel at Holy Trinity, Long Melford, should be considered in relation to the Bokenham/York connection. John Clopton, who helped to endow the chapel and was principally responsible for the expansion of Holy Trinity, was the half-brother of Katherine Denston, one of Bokenham's patrons who had married a military associate of Richard of York. He was also a Lancastrian, and nearly died when he was arrested for communicating with Margaret of Anjou about the overthrow of Edward IV in 1461.

A  B 

Figure 3.11: John Clopton from Holy Trinity, Long Melford. A: the full window as it exists today post-destruction and reconstitution. B: a closeup of John Clopton. Note the Yorkist roses to his left, and the sun of York in the topmost part of his particular portion of the window.

That he did not die is likely due to this Yorkist connection, and the white roses of York appear in the windows he gave to Long Melford as a sign of his newfound political allegiance. What also appears in the family chapel, however, is a rich set of significations regarding Christ and making reference to Mary Magdalene.

Figure 3.12: composite images of the center roof beam of the Clopton chantry chapel. A shows the north-facing side of the beam, and B shows the south-facing side of the beam.

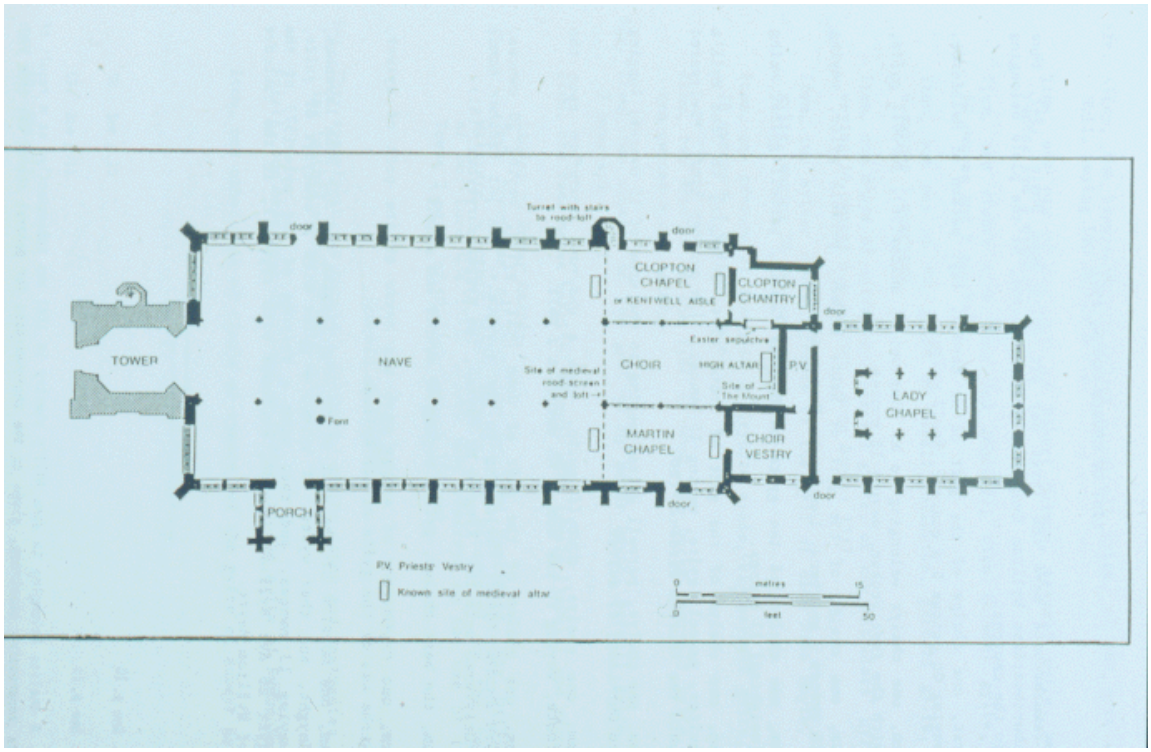


Figure 3.13: the plan of Holy Trinity Long Melford. The location of the Clopton chantry chapel is marked.

The chapel roof consists of a central roof beam running parallel to the long axis of the church, with twenty-two paired crossbeams branching out from the center. Portions of the Sarum liturgy are painted on the crossbeam, with the following on the northern portion of the beam, facing away from the altar:

Propicius esto
parce nobis d*omine*
Ab omni malo
lib*era nos domine*
Ab insidiis diaboli, lib*era nos domine*
A dampnacio*n*e perptua, lib*era nos domine*
Ab appetitu inanis gl*or*ie, lib*era nos domine*
Ab omni i*n*mundicia
mentis et corpo*r*is, lib*era nos domine*
Ab inmu*n*dis cogitacio*n*ib*us*, lib*era nos domine*

A cecicate cordis, lib*era nos domine*
A subitanea et
improuisa morte, lib*era nos domine*.

[Be merciful, spare us O Lord. From all evil, deliver us O Lord. From the snares of the devil, deliver us O Lord. From everlasting damnation, deliver us O Lord. From desire of foolish vainglory, deliver us O Lord. From all foulness of mind and body, deliver us O Lord. From impure thoughts, deliver us O Lord. From blindness of spirit, deliver us O Lord. From sudden and unprovided death, deliver us O Lord.]

And the following on the southern portion of the beam, facing towards the altar:

Per misteriu*m* s*anct*ae
incarnatio*n*is tu*a*e lib*era nos domine*
Per nativitate*m* tua*m*, lib*era nos domine*
Per s*anct*am circu*m*cisione*m* tuu*m*, lib*era nos domine*
Per baptismu*m* tuu*m* lib*era nos domine*
Per ieiuniu*m* tuu*m* lib*era nos domine*
Per cruce*m et* passione*m* tua*m* lib*era nos domine*
Per gl*or*iosa*m* resurrecci*o*nem lib*era nos domine*
Per asce*n*sionem tuu*m* lib*era nos domine*
Per gr*ati*am s*anct*i sp*irit*us peractiti lib*era nos domine*
In hora mortis
succurre nobis d*omi*ne
In die iudicii, lib*era nos domine*.[275]

[Through the mystery of your holy incarnation, deliver us O Lord. Through your nativity, deliver us O Lord. Through your holy circumcision, deliver us O Lord. Through your baptism, deliver us O Lord. Through your fasting, deliver us O Lord. Through your cross and passion, deliver us O Lord. Through your glorious resurrection, deliver us

[275] Images of the individual portions of the liturgy can be seen at http://www.matthewedavis.net/dissertation_images/collections/show/1. Additionally, larger versions of the two center beam images are available at http://www.matthewedavis.net/dissertation_images/Melford_Roofbeam_Middle-opposite_side.tif and http://www.matthewedavis.net/dissertation_images/Melford_Roofbeam_Middle-altar_side.tif, respectively. The sections of the Litany described here follow, for the most part, the Litany as printed in Littlehales, lxiv-lxv.

O Lord. Through your ascension, deliver us O Lord. Through the grace of the holy spirit, the Paraclete, deliver us O Lord. In the hour of death help us, O Lord. On the day of judgement, deliver us O Lord.]

The text here mirrors portions of the invocation to Christ in the Sarum litany that occur after the litany of saints but before the set of verses that end with "te rogamus, audi nos" ["we beseech you to hear us"] . The structure of the litany at this point is a call and response, with a cantor beginning each of the lines and the choir completing the response.[276] Additionally, both the tomb of John Clopton, which would have served as the Easter sepulchure, and twelve now-empty niches that likely held statues of the Apostles are along the southern wall of the chapel, with the tomb having a space allowing the high altar to be visible.

A  B 

Figure 3.14: architectural elements from the Clopton chantry chapel. A: The niches that likely held statues of the Apostles. B: the tomb of John Clopton, looking through to the high altar.

[276] An example of this, beginning from the point where the text begins on the roof beam, can be heard at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiM9uJIN64g#t=4m36s (accessed 12-23-2012). This is not the Sarum liturgy, however, so there are some differences.

Lydgate's *Testament*

In addition to the scrollwork with portions of litany on the central roofbeam, verses from Lydgate's *Testament* are visible in the chapel. The verses from the *Testament* are out of order. They were chosen to follow the same general theme as the Latin litany of the center beam, and the scribe took liberties in reproducing them.

Figure 3.15: The four corners of the Clopton chantry chapel. The southeastern and southwestern ccorners are at the top, and the northeastern and northwestern corners at the bottom. Note that the southwestern and northeastern corners have a very definite ending to the vinework, while the northwestern corner continues the vinework.

Where Lydgate consistently wrote in the singular in the *Testament,* the scribe that painted the verses at Long Melford writes in the plural; his alterations recall Bokenham's changing of some of the verses in his *vita* of Mary Magdalene. This change to the panel resignifies Lydgate's *Testament,* altering it from the prayer of Lydgate as a singular

monk to a prayer for the entire Clopton family. Furthermore, the decorative vine that each of the four carved scrolls are wrapped around signifies a new devision in how the reader is intended to understand the work.

The verses on the southern wall have a very definite beginning with the hand holding the scroll, and a definite end where the two intertwined vines come apart slightly. The vines on the western and northern walls, conversely, have two different scrolls, but a single vine, suggesting continuity between these two sections. The final set of verses on the northern wall are set apart slightly from the others, suggesting that this is meant to be an end to the section that begins in the the southwestern corner. Finally, the last vine, on the eastern wall over the altar, has a definite ending but lacks a definite beginning. The vine starts in the northeastern corner, and the use of roses rather than the acorns and acanthus leaves of the other three walls suggests that this is a different vine entirely.

Figure 3.16: features of the *Testament* scrollwork. A: the final scroll section on the northern wall of the Clopton Chantry chaptel, indicating an intentional ending of the scrollwork. B: the use of roses on the eastern wall of the Clopton chantry chapel.

Because of these visual distinctions and the particular verses chosen from the *Testament*, I believe that this scrollwork is intended to serve a similar purpose to the sections from the Latin litany used in the center beam. The southern wall introduces the prayer, showing the proper humility before the Lord, contrition for the sins of age, and a desire to confess their sins and be forgiven. The western and northern walls, then, serve as a written confession – a general understanding of sin and a desire for forgiveness that mirrors that of Mary Magdalene written, but not spoken, in Bokenham. The eastern wall serves as Christ's response to this request, framing absolution as part of a pilgrimage from a sinful state to a state of grace.

"Jh*e*su Mercy / And Gramercy" and the Clopton Chantry Chapel

It is in this context – the call-and-response of the litany and the created call-and-response of the verses from the *Testament* chosen – that I will consider the last architectural element: the repetition of "Jh*e*su mercy / And gramercy" across the roof beams of the chapel. They are on either side of the central beam with the exerpts from the litany, repeated twice per beam. Those beams closer to the altar, on the right hand side as one faces east, all have the phrase on them. It also appears once on the beams opposite to the altar, on the fourth beam in from the eastmost edge of the chapel, and once over the squint between the Clopton chapel and the Clopton Chantry chapel.

Figure 3.17: a composite picture showing the repetition and placement of the phrase "Jh*es*u mercy / And gramercy" across the roof beams of the chapel on either side of the central roof beam.

Figure 3.18: "Jh*es*u mercy And gramercy" on the roof beams of the Clopton chantry chapel

In searching for this particular phrase, I have only found it twice—and only once in the same form as we see here. The first instance is in reference to a Latin breviary purchased at Shaftesbury in Dorset in the fourteenth century by Alice Champnys, a nun there, from Richard Marshall, who was rector of the parish church of St. Rumbold in Shaftsbury.[277] There, it is part of a fuller prayer:

> O swete Jhesu, the son of God, the endless swetnesse of hevyn and of erthe and of the worlde, be in my herte, in my mynde, in my wytt, in my wylle, now and ever more, Amen. Jhesu mercy, Jhesy gramercy, Jhesu for thy mercy, Jhesu, as I trust to thy mercy, Jhesu as thow art fulle of mercy, Jhesu have mercy, on me and alle mankynde redemyd with thy precyouse blode.[278]

The Latin line preceding this prayer, "trium puerorum cantemus himnum quem cantabant in camino ignis benedicentes Dominum" ["let us sing the hymn of the three

[277] Power (235) suggests that Marshall is a knight, apparently on the strength of the Latin "domino" preceding his name. Champnys, however, is not given a title despite the "dominae" preceding her name, and in the absence of additional information (they both lack entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography*), I see no reason not to assume that "dominus" in both cases is in reference to their ecclesiastical positions.
[278] Wright and Haliwell, 117. See also Power, where the inscription prefacing this prayer is used as an example of ownership of manuscripts by nuns in the great abbeys of southern England.

children, which they sang in fiery furnance, praising the Lord,"] appears as an antiphon in the *oratio post missam* of the Roman missal and in the *graciarum actio post missam* of the Sarum missal. In both cases, what generally follows is the *kyrie elesion,* so this prayer appears to be an expanded version of the request for mercy signified by the fossil Greek phrase in the Latin litany. As Holy Trinity was part of the lands held by Bury St. Edmunds, and both Bury St. Edmunds and Shaftesbury were both Benedictine holds and places of pilgrimage, it is entirely possible that the phrase spread through the travel of pilgrims between the two monastic houses, and from there to Holy Trinity when John Clopton planned the decoration of the chantry chapel.

The second instance where the phrase "Jhesu Mercy and Gramercy" is found is in Arundel 327, where it appears at the end of each of the works intended for a community of nuns, likely at Denney Abbey. Since Denney was a house of Poor Clares at the time the colophon was written, it seems more likely to me that the use of "Jhesu Mercy / And Gramercy" is the result of scribal practice spreading through pilgrimage between the two larger Benedictine holdings. Additionally, since Katherine Denston, one of the dedicatees of the *Legendys* and Clopton's half-sister*,* was resident at Denney it is possible than an alternate means of transmission occurred through her passing along the phrase to her half-brother rather than it coming from the influence of Bury St. Edmunds. While the use of it in the *Legendys* after many of the legends serves a similar purpose to the *kyrie elesion* in the litany, the repetition of the phrase may also take the place of repeating it after each of the verses from Lydgate or serve some ritual purpose now lost to us.

Unfortunately, all of this has to remain speculative at this point. All records of the text I have been able to find in secondary sources return to *Reliquae Antiquae,* which indicates that it is in the private collection of a "Henry Walter, Esq. of The Willows, near Windsor." Walter was a surveyor by trade; the 1856 reprint of a map he drew up in 1823 is available for sale and can be readily found online.[279] The Willows, long since demolished, appears to have been between the parishes of Bray and Clewer according to this map.[280] According to *The Gentleman's Magazine*,[281] Walter spent part of his youth in Essex and was buried there at Havering, which is now part of Greater London. He was a member of the Camden Society, which published *Reliquae Antiquae*, and the colophon came to be included through the work of one of the contributors, J. Gough Nichols. Walter's will, composed in 1840 and indicating that he was attached to the parish of New Windsor, went through probate in 1846. His possessions, presumably including the breviary, were given to his wife Elizabeth and from there to the survivors of his brothers and sister upon her death. No specific mention is made of his library or of the breviary.[282] Nor is there any indication of how he came to acquire the breviary, its material provenance, or what else it might have contained.

What is evident, however, is that the phrase "Jhesu Mercy / And Gramercy" appears between individuals attached to the house of York at Denney and those responsible for the building of the Clopton Chantry chapel at Long Melford. The lands these religious houses were held in were influenced, if not held outright, by Richard

[279] Walter, "map." Accessed 05-17-2013.
[280] Ibid.
[281] *The Gentleman's Magazine,* 546.
[282] Walter, "Will."

Duke of York and his retainers: he used Shaftesbury as a base of operations in dealing with the earl of Devon in 1455, and held sections of Cambridgeshire that bordered, if not directly intermingled with, those controlled by Denney Abbey. And of course, Richard through the Bouchiers controlled the Honor of Clare.

All of this leaves us with a wealth of historical, material, and legal evidence that suggests that Bokenham was connected to the house of York and that the production of the prolocutory of the Mary Magdalene life was an attempt to position the house of York to attain greater political power. In this way, I think that Delany is correct. However, Horobin is right that the removal of the prolocutory from the Abbotsford Legenda suggests that it was not seen as integral to the scheme of the life of Mary Magdalene and as such is not the clarion call to position Richard of York for eventual succession that Delany suggests. It is at this point, however, that we should consider the role of social networks in the dissemination of information.

While Cicely's household had a definite devotional element to it, it can be assumed that her household was also well aware of the Spanish claims of Richard of York.[283] Conversely, Arundel 327 was copied and distributed to a group of nuns who were less directly connected to Richard of York but would have been attracted to the devotional messages presented in the *Legendys.* These readers, in turn, could have been influenced by the prolocutory's mention of Richard's claim to the throne of Castile, and in turn could have spread it to other people.

[283] Armstrong, 68-91.

The community of readers surrounding Mary Magdalene in East Anglia, which is the traditional social context where Arundel 327 is situated, should be expanded to also include the physical objects themselves and the collected groups of ideas that those readers interpreted the work, using the methods I outlined in the last chapter. The connection between the Clopton chapel and Arundel 327 suggests this is true, and I think in such an environment it is not a stretch to interpret the idea of Richard of York's hereditary claim to the throne of Spain is a sign that was first created to have a particular resonance to readers interested in supporting the possible marriage between Edward and a daughter of Charles VII, with a hidden subtext of supporting a Yorkist-Burgundian connection only apparent to those who understood the particular resonances of the inclusion of Vézelay. It was only later, when circumstances changed and the same words were still being spread through copying and repetition amongst the community of readers associated with Bokenham, that what had been a way to show the validity of Edward as a marriage match for Charles VII's daughter became a claim reinforcing the hereditary rights of Richard of York to the throne of England. In this way, both Horobin and Delany are right—Bokenham is not a Yorkist partisan working to push Richard on to the throne, but he is providing yet another set of connection in a network that creates the environment that eventually demands the placement of the House of York on the throne.

Ahead to the Next Generation

The network surrounding Mary Magdalene in the mid-fifteenth century, then, has many elements. Mary Magdalene is presented as a figure of particular efficacy to those

that pray to her, and this presentation is then combined with the power of the House of York in order to shield this increased position of the saint. Moreover, the network of readers associated with the House of York serve as a vector to spread these ideas, which are in turn encoded in architectural elements in association with symbols of Yorkist hegemony, such as Holy Trinity, Long Melford. Part of that symbolism, the phrase "Jh*es*u Mercy," would also appear in the section of the Digby *Mary Magdalene* that most closely resembles the sort of liturgic environment seen in the Clopton Chantry chapel.

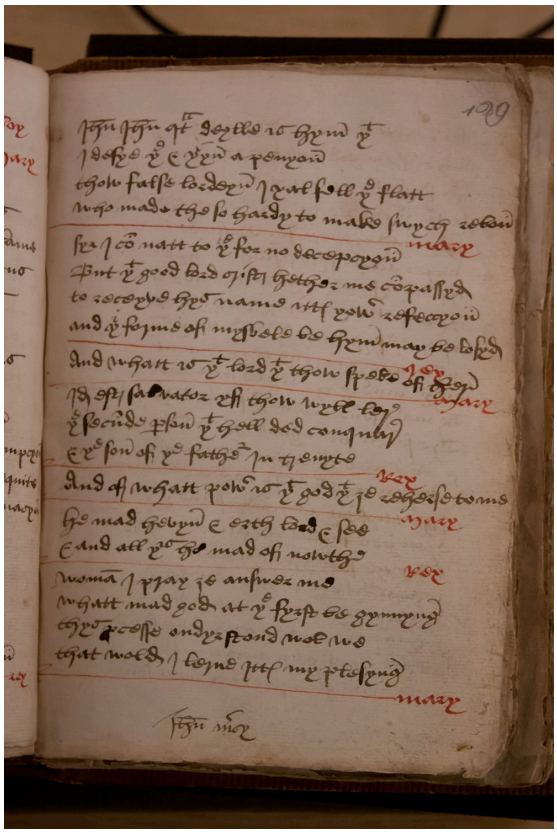


Figure 3.19: Folio 109r of Bodleian Digby MS 133, containing the Digby *Mary Magdalene*. Note the phrase "Jh*es*u m*er*cy" at the bottom of the page, prior to the long section in the play where Mary Magdalene would describes Christ's attributes.

The recurrence of the phrase in difference contexts regarding Mary Magdalene suggests that although the chapel itself did not make a direct connection between Mary Magdalene and Christ, the connection between Mary Magdalene's *vita* and the phrase in Arundel 327 had its own analogues later in the century.

Likewise Mary Magdalene's association with the House of York is reflected in Cicely Neville's personal devotion, as evidenced by her will, and the public devotion of the house as a political entity, as evidenced by how Margaret of York presents herself in the frontispiece of *Le dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ*, a book composed for her shortly her marriage to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, in 1468.

Figure 3.20: Margaret of York as Mary Magdalene from the frontispiece of *Le dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ* (BL Add. 7970 fol 1v).

In it, Margaret is in a kneeling position before Christ with her arms extended as to embrace him. In turn, Christ is cautioning her not to embrace him, his palm turned down and with his body arched away from her. The wounds on his palm, feet, and side show that this is the risen Christ, rather than a depiction of Christ prior to his Passion, and the colors of her clothing are the gold, black and white that Margaret wore at her marriage. Thus, clearly the figure is intended to be Margaret, and while there is some speculation that she is taking on the role of the Virgin Mary before Christ based on the fact that it is an interior rather than exterior scene, it is more likely that the scene is meant to be representative of the *Noli me tangere* and that Margaret of York is in this moment meant to look at herself in the guise of Mary Magdalene during her private contemplation.

So in this frontispiece, we see the conflation of Mary Magdalene as a particularly efficacious saint for aristocratic ladies developed by Bokenham taken to an extreme—a patron placing herself in a position directly meant to signify that of the saint at a particularly important moment of salvation history, and then from there meant to connect her, carrying the significations of the saint, to the House of Burgundy. Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse*, at this point, has transcended the boundaries of the genitive *apostolorum* portion of the formulation and is a power to be reckoned with. As we will see in the next chapter, this version of the saint would, through performance, become still more divorced from the other characters of the *vita* as her conception as *apostelesse* takes center stage.

CHAPTER IV

FOLLOWING THE *APOSTELESSE*

The last chapter discussed the construction of Mary Magdalene by Osbern Bokenham contained in his Legendys of Hooly Wummen and the Abbotsford Legenda Aurea. By considering how Bokenham fashioned the saint through careful utilization of his source material, I showed how Bokenham positioned Mary Magdalene not just as a saint amongst other saints, but as the epitome of exemplarity. He further developed her into an apostolic figure in her own right divorced from the "of the apostles" portion of the phrase *apostola apostolorum*. I then examined how this utilization worked for Bokenham's patron, Isobel Bouchier, why the prolocutory section of the work in the *Legendys* served Yorkist political ends at the time of its composition, and the implications of the remnants of that service in the *vita* proper. Positing that the poem was originally intended to further Richard of York's political interests on the continent, particularly in regards to Burgundy, I noted that such an explanation resolved the debate regarding the intent of the work created by the discovery of the Abbotsford *Legenda*, and that although the particular political moment that encouraged the creation of the work had passed, the sentiments regarding Mary Magdalene and the connection among her as *apostelesse*, the House of York, and East Anglian culture continued into the War of the Roses and beyond, as evidenced by Cecily Neville's will.

By noting both Bokenham's use of sources and the particular circumstances of the composition of the *vita* connected with the date he notes in the prolocutory, I was

able to describe how he constructed Mary Magdalene as an exemplar. In this final chapter, I wish to look at how this model Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* functions in the late fifteenth century through an analysis of the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, contained in Bodleian MSS Digby 133.

Unfortunately, we do not have the same clear provenance for the *Mary Magdalene* as we do for her *vita* as produced by Bokenham. Digby 133 is a composite miscellany containing texts ranging from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. While the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials concern themselves with alchemy, astronomy, or other aspects of white magic, the materials from the fifteenth century in the book are plays—the aforementioned *Mary Magdalene, The Conversion of Saint Paul, The Killing of the Children,* and a fragment of the play *Wisdom*. The main scribe of *The Killing of the Children* is also the scribe of the *Wisdom* fragment, but the other plays are in different hands.[284] The paper stock for the plays is also different, and the *Mary Magdalene* is gathered in octavo while the other plays are in quarto. However, despite these differences there are some connections among the dramatic materials.

Besides the already-mentioned scribal connection between *Wisdom* and *The Killing of the Children*, the author of the *Mary Magdalene* took some lines from the latter, providing a tentative link between the two, and through the *Killing of the Children* to *Wisdom.* Finally, the initials or name of Myles Blomefylde, an Elizabethan book collector, physician, and alchemist, appear on the *Mary Magdalene* as well as the

[284] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, ix-x.

Wisdom fragment and *The Conversion of St. Paul*. He was also the owner of the only complete manuscript of the play *Fulgens and Lucres* (now Huntington 62599).

Of the plays, only the *Mary Magdalene* play existed in Digby 133 at the time of the behest of Kenelm Digby to the Bodleian containing the work. Furthermore, it is unclear how Myles Blomefylde came to possess the book; scholars speculate that William Blomfild, a monk at Bury before the Dissolution, came to possess the plays in Digby 133 and passed them on to Myles. It is also possible, however, that the plays were contained in the Chelmsford play book and that Myles had possession of it at one point.[285] This does not preclude an origin at or near Bury, but it does mean that the route one or all the plays took to reach Blomefylde is not clear enough to consider the specific means of transmission.[286]

Although the play cannot be pinned down geographically in terms of its material provenance, it is possible to argue for its location in Norfolk on dialectal grounds.[287] This dialect is too far north for the geographic association with Bury to support it as the place of production, but both sets of evidence place the play directly in an East Anglian context. Since the play is a communal enterprise that is operating in East Anglia, it provides an excellent example of lay thinking regarding the saint at the close of the fifteenth century and of the expanded scope of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* by that point.

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[285] Coldewey, 103-121.
[286] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, xii-xv. A detailed codicological description of the Mary Magdalene gatherings can be found on xxx-xxxii.
[287] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, xxxvi-xi.

While the play is not as fully committed to presenting Mary Magdalene as an exemplar, it does show that the growing status of Mary Magdalene as an *apostelesse* had enough cultural traction to be the subject of a major work of dramatic performance. Moreover, the play also provides an example of how, thanks to the circumstances of their shared name, Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary could be easily affiliated in the eyes of the viewing audience—a legacy of the conflation of the two seen in Bokenham. The narrative of the play is also non-linear when compared to the events of Mary Magdalene's established *vita,* an aspect of the play that is akin to the architectural expamples of the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral and its cloisters. By examining how these elements make the play both similar to and different from the *Legenda Aurea* and Bokenham's *vita,* I will show the late fifteenth-century legacy of specific changes that Bokenham introduced into the network of ideas regarding the saint.

I will primarily examine the text of the play, but will include an appendix briefly discussing the characters and a possible staging of the work in consideration of it as a performed object. My intention in doing this is to explain the assumptions that have led to some of my conclusions regarding the work, rather than to speak extensively on how the play might have been performed, which I have done elsewhere and would be digressive in this context.[288]

The play follows, roughly, the structure of Jacobus' *vita*, with the episodes in the play following specific sets of lines in the *Legenda.* Much like Bokenham, the

[288] The article containing this information is currently in preparation for submission.

playwright or playwrights add or shift events in order to serve their specific ends.[289] While Bokenham's aim is to build Mary Magdalene up as an exemplar for Yorkist interests both at home and on the continent, the playwright here adds and removes elements both to serve the necessities of performance and to reinforce Mary Magdalene's exemplary roles as an everyman figure and her position as a female preacher.

First Episode: Introductions and the Earthly Tyrants

While the *Legenda* begins with the "*De Nomine*" section, dealing with Mary Magdalene's name, the play does not begin with Mary Magdalene at all. Instead, the Emperor of Rome stands before the audience, exhorting them to be silent "in þe peyn of forfetur" before describing his power in broad terms and stating his intent to kill all those who are disobedient to his gods:

> Yff ony þer be to my goddys [dys]obedyent,
> Dyssevyr tho harlottys and make to me declaracyon.
> And I xall make all swych to dye,
> Thos precharsse of Crystys incarnacyon!
> […] se þat my lawys
> In all your partyys have dew obeysavns!
> Inquere and aske, eche day þat davnnys
> Yf in my pepul be fovnd ony weryouns
> Contrary to me in ony chansse,
> Or wyth my goldyn goddys grocth or grone!
> I woll marre swych harlottys wyth mordor and myschanse!
> Yff ony swyche remayn, put hem in repreffe.[290]

[289] While I believe that the play is most likely an accretive work—hence playwrights here—I will use playwright for ease of use throughout this chapter.

[290] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 1, 26-29, 33-40. While I will use the EETS line numbers for ease of reference throughout the chapter, I do not feel these line numbers are in fact correct. Editorially, they are taken from previous editions rather than from the conventions of the author in the manuscript itself. Moreover, there

This opening speech is not concerned with Mary Magdalene, but instead with anyone who is working against the intentions of the empire. Moreover, in equating civil and religious authority, the Emperor is introducing a thread in the play that will come into effect later with the analogue of the prince of Marseilles.

However, that thread is incidental at this point; the Emperor serves instead as a stock tyrant whose function is to open the play in a way that draws the audience's attention and engages with them. Moreover, his concern is and remains with Christ, and it is in opposition to Christ that he operates throughout the work. In fact, all of the earthly tyrants—who appear later in this introductory episode on their own scaffolds—remain ignorant of Mary Magdalene throughout the play. Instead, they are concerned with controlling lands and people, although as Jerome Bush has noted all they actually control are the particular scaffolds on which they stand.[291] The Emperor makes his desire for control evident at the conclusion of his speech by demanding of the people present—which I take to also include the audience for reasons that will become clear when Christ performs a similar move at the raising of Lazarus—their accession and approval of his request.[292]

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are printing errors regarding the placement of the line and folio numbers in relation to the text in the EETS edition. A version of the playtext with corrected line and folio numbers is available at http://www.matthewedavis.net/playtexts/play.php.

[291] Bush, 140.

[292] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 44 s.d.

Because this is a play about Mary Magdalene, it is odd that the earthly tyrants appear in it at all. Among the three of them, their courts, and the messenger that moves among them, they take up a little over a tenth of the play's lines, and two-thirds of those lines appear in the first episode. Moreover, they do not serve the function of introducing Mary Magdalene, or telling us anything about her. Their role in this first episode is solely to place the play historically and to serve as a threat hanging over the head of Jesus, who does not appear until well into the play.

The true introduction of Mary Magdalene occurs in the next set of lines, where her father Cyrus appears on his own scaffold, intended to represent Magdalene Castle. He first announces himself with a blustering speech that would not seem out of place in the Emperor's mouth before explaining what exactly his holdings are and introducing his three children: Lazarus, who is referred to only as his son; Mary, who is "ful fayur and ful of femynyte;" and Martha, who is "ful [of] bevte and delycyte." He then goes on further to note that both of his daughters are "ful of womanly merrorys and benygnyte" before dividing up the holdings between the three along the lines we see in Jacobus: Lazarus receives Jerusalem, Mary the castle, and Martha Bethany.[293]

Cyrus does so differently in the play than in the *vita*, however. Jacobus explains that the three siblings hold the territory in common and that the division he lays out was one of convenience among the three of them.[294] The play, conversely, is acutely aware of the costs and rents associated with the holdings and the necessity for all three of the

[293] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 71-74.
[294] Jacobus, 18-19.

siblings to be taken care of, suggesting that its audience would accept the narrative reality of the scene only if it resonated with their own experiences with land ownership or the division of propery. Where in Jacobus the mention of the property serves to signify class abstractly, the playwright wants his audience to see themselves in the characters of Magdalene castle, and eventually to see Mary Magdalene as representative of all mankind. Real people of Mary Magdalene's stated class have to dispose of real property, and for people who have just come out of the War of the Roses holding aristocratic properties in common is something that would cause them to question the veracity of the play. For this reason, Cyrus explicitly declares which sibling is to receive which holding, and the siblings themselves express their gratitude in economic terms. Lazarus says that Cyrus has "gravntyd swych a lyfelod worthy / Me to restreyn from all nessessyte," Mary Magdalene thanks Cyrus for "your gyftys ryall / Owt of peynys of poverte vs to onbynd," and Martha that these bequests will "Vs to save from wordly dessetres."[295]

Mary Magdalene also shows the first hints of the concern with luxury that will become her path to falling into sin. After noting that her father's gift removes her from poverty, she states that

> Thys is a preseruatyff from streytnes we fynd,
> From worldly labors to my covmfortyng,
> For thys lyfflod is abyll for þe dowtter of a kyng,
> Thys place of plesavns, þe soth to seye![296]

[295] Baker, Murphy, and Hall 87-88, 95-96, 104.
[296] Ibid., 97-100.

In comparison, Lazarus requests that he be granted the grace to "lyue to thy plesowans" so that "we may haue joye wythowtyn weryauns," and Martha that "hey in heuen awansyd mot yow be […] whan ye xal hens pass."[297] The playwright here is noting that Mary Magdalene is not thinking of the bequest in the proper terms. Instead of thanking her father and hoping that the she will be worthy of the gift he grants, as Lazarus does, or that he find the bliss of heaven by this gift, as Martha does, Mary instead thinks about what the gift will allow her to do in advancement of a life of ease. Already the door is open a crack for Luxury to enter. All is not well in Magdalene Castle, a fact that Cyrus does not notice as he calls for "wyn and spycys" to be served to them.[298]

The rest of the first episode concerns itself with the networks of political and temporal power prior to Christ's ascension through the establishment of a hierarchy, centered on the Emperor, devoted to scheming against Christ. The Emperor commands a messenger to go first to Herod, then to Pilate, to order the enforcement of his decree regarding those that are against his gods. The Emperor's overlordship can be seen as a social network, then, and the messenger as the physical representative of information as it travels through the network. In each case, the messenger moves between scaffolds, as nodes, and disseminates the Emperor's message. As the messenger does so, both of the other two earthly tyrants present themselves in a similar mode to their Emperor: Herod demands silence on pain of death, stating that if the audience speaks he "xal hovrle of

[297] Ibid., 90, 92, 107-109.
[298] Ibid., 113 s.d.

yower hedys," while Pilate states that "I wyll yow natt spare / Tyl ye haue jugment to be hangyd and draw" to those members of the audience who might consider acts against the law.[299] The speeches, then, serve to signify who the character is to the audience much more than the actual announcement of the character's name, as they play on established significations of the character from other dramatic works.

Herod as tyrant, full of bluster, is a figure that is a commonplace of the drama, and can be seen as such (along with the two soldiers that serve him here) in play sixteen of the York Cycle and play twenty of the N-town cycle.[300] Here in the play he represents the tyranny of state power as exercised militarily, an interesting echo of his central role in the *Killing of the Children.* Similarly, Pilate serves as a representation of the tyranny of civil authority as exercised in the courts, and his speech is full of allusions to the law. This is in keeping with his stock character as seen in play thirty of the York Cycle, but differs from his depiction in N-town play thirty, where he is seen as a more sympathetic judge.[301] In both cases, though, he retains his position as a judge even when there are no cases to be tried before him, which reinforces that it is not the actual functions of a judge that he represents, but rather the position of the courts in society.

The two tyrants, as representatives of their own networks, vow to disseminate the message throughout their holdings. So while the rulers are physically held to their particular scaffolds, they operate in concert as a singular network dedicated to the

[299] Ibid. 142, 235-236.
[300] Spector, 187-197; Beadle, 107-125. Especially note lines 29-39 in the York play, where he threatens bodily harm to those who would act against his law.
[301] Interestingly, N-town 30 also has a Messenger character, who moves between Cayphas and Pilate, rather than between a set of earthly rulers.

suppression of Christ. Their claims of power are only so many words, but they are words that in fact do have authority within the context of their own network of influence. The play is modeling the exact sort of network that could spread ideas regarding Mary Magdalene during the fifteenth century, and way the messenger operates as he moves between them and the language they use suggest that they are to be seen as signifying the negative aspects of power as opposed to the more positive aspects modeled by Christ and Mary Magdalene later in the play.

Furthermore, the earthly tyrants are concerned with fulfilling the letter of the Emperor's words, itself a reinforcement of the hierarchy the Emperor establishes through his messages. Herod declares that he will "complyshe hys cummavnddment" by piercing the infidel with swords, while Pilate states that he "xal sett many a snare"[302] for those that act against the Emperor's commandment. In neither case is Mary Magdalene specifically referenced, but the Earthly tyrants at this point are serving as prototypes of behavior, informing the audience of how leadership operates in the play in their particular spheres of influence.

Because Cyrus, Herod, and Pilate begin their portions of the play with boasts that are similar to that of the Emperor, these boasts serve signify to the audience that the character in question is a person of some authority. This authority is further reinforced, as Bush notes, by their position on raised scaffolds above the common performance space of the platea.[303] The servants connected to the three—the Emperor's scribe and

[302] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 218, 257.
[303] Bush, 140.

provost, the philosophers and soldiers of Herod, and the sergeants of Pilate—are visual signifiers of what sphere each of the tyrants represent. Besides the fact that the three tyrants have servants, the physical aspects of the characters' dress and staging—the Emperor's throne, Herod's ruby and green pearl jewelry, and Pilate's rich clothing—serve as material signifiers to the audience of the importance of these characters in the narrative world of the play.[304]

Cyrus is not part of the Emperor's social and political network, however, and he receives no message. Moreover, he is the only one in this early portion of the play who is not isolated familially as the three earthly tyrants have underlings instead. More importantly, he is the only one besides the Emperor at this early stage to be served with "wyn and spycys" at the conclusion of his speech, a similarity to the Emperor that will come to signify an independent earthly power, rather than one under the control of another. When combined with what the audience already knows regarding Mary Magdalene's background from the *vitae* regarding her, these differences in the events at Magdalene Castle versus the other scaffolds signify to the audience that the events that occur there are divorced from those that are occurring on the scaffolds of the earthly tyrants.

Cyrus and his family are opening their own thread in the play—one in which Mary Magdalene will serve as an everyman figure, intended to model for the audience both the loss and achievement of salvation typical of morality plays. Despite the hints of

[304] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 18, 153-154, 229.

her interest in luxurious goods, she is at this point considered a good person, and her reaction to her father's death reflects this:

> The inwyttyssymus God þat euyr xal reyne,
> Be hys help an sowlys sokor!
> To whom it is most nedfull to cumplayn,
> He to bry[n]g vs owt of ower dolor;
> He is most mytyest governowre,
> From soroyng vs to restryne.[305]

Unlike Herod, who worships "Mahond," Pilate, who invokes "Martys," or Tiberius, who claims to be "chyff rewlar" of heaven and hell, Mary Magdalene shows herself in these lines to be a believer in the true and proper God of the play—as are her siblings, who invoke "God" and "Ower Lord," respectively.[306] Additionally, when Cyrus dies she is not the one who notes that they now have the overlordship and rents from his properties. Instead, Lazarus does so, and Mary Magdalene invokes the aristocratic value of largesse by inviting both her siblings, and to a lesser extent the viewing audience, into her castle:

> Now, brothyr and systyr, welcum ȝe be,
> And therof specyally I pray ȝow all![307]

At this point, then, Mary Magdalene is serving as an exemplar of the right way for a layperson to behave, in keeping with the model of other everyman figures such as

[305] Ibid.,285-290.
[306] Ibid.,4,143,257, 282, 296.
[307] Ibid., 303-304.

Mankind or Everyman from their eponymous plays, or Mankind in *The Castle of Perseverance*. She has not yet fallen into sin, and the means that cause her to do so only reinforce her status as an everyman figure and the allegorical nature of both Magdalene Castle and this portion of the play, as we will see in the next two episodes.

Second Episode: From History to Allegory

While the three earthy tyrants are the enemies of Christ, they are not the enemies of Mary Magdalene. Instead, her enemies are the allegorical figures representing sin, and the play changes focus accordingly. The text signals the shift in episode, from the historical to the allegorical, and in intent with the first stage direction that sums up events to come rather than directing action: "Her xal entyr þe Kyng of the Word, þe Flesch, and þe Dylfe, wyth þe Seuen Dedly Synnys, a Bad Angyll, an an Good Angyl, þus seyyng þe Word."[308] While the final bit of this stage direction does serve to indicate that the World is about to speak, the rest of this section is not announcing action. There are subsequent stage directions announcing the entrance of each of the other allegorical tyrants, and the Good Angel does not speak until well after Mary Magdalene's fall.[309] Instead, it is indicating a shift from the historical model of the first episode to a moral and cosmological frame of reference that will serve as the backdrop for Mary Magdalene's fall and redemption in the scriptural portion of the play.

These tyrants—the King of the World, the Flesh, and the Prince of Devils—all serve as representative overlords over spheres of temptation that turn man away from

[308] Ibid., 304 s.d.
[309] Ibid., 333 s.d., 357 s.d., 588.

Christ and towards damnation. Therefore, when they first appear on stage in the play it is to present themselves as having power in their particular sphere in a way that is similar to that of Pilate and Herod, although with much more influence. The World states that he is control of the "seuyn prynsys of hell," by which he means the pagan gods that Pilate worships, and associates them with the metals of the earthly tyrants' rich array. He presents this through a direct act of signification:

> In me restyt þe ordor of þe metellys seuyn,
> Þe whych to þe seuen planyttys ar knett ful sure:
> Gold perteynyng to þe sonne, as astronemere nevyn;
> Sylvyr to þe mone, whyte and pure;
> Iryn onto þe Maris þat long may endure;
> Þe fegetyff mercury onto Mercuryns;
> Copyr onto Venus, red in hys merrour;
> The frangabyll tyn to Jubyter, yf ȝe can dyscus;
> On þis planyt Saturne, ful of rancure,
> Þis soft metell led, nat of so gret puernesse;
> Lo, alle þis rych tresor wyth þe Word doth indure--
> The seuyn prynsys of hell, of gret bowntosnesse![310]

Likewise, when the King of Flesh is introduced, it is again through an act of signification:

> I, Kyng of Flesch, florychyd in my flowers,
> Of deyntys delycyows I have grett domynacyon!
> So ryal a kyng was neuyr borne in bowrys,
> Nor hath more delyth, ne more delectacyon!
> For I haue comfortatywys to my comfortacyon:

[310] Ibid., 313-324.

Dya galonga, ambra, and also margaretton--
Alle þis is at my lyst, aȝens alle vexacyon!
All wykkyt thyngys I woll sett asyde.
Clary, pepur long, wyth granorum paradysy,
Zenzybyr and synamom at euery tyde--
Lo, alle swych deyntyys delycyas vse I!
Wyth swyche deyntyys I have my blysse![311]

Here, rather than the direct invocation of aspects that the three earthly tyrants and Cyrus have pointed out regarding their stage and dress, the King of Flesh's control is through the wine and spices that both the Emperor and Cyrus called for at the end of their introductory speeches. Whereas rich dress and material wealth is seen as the province of the World, the Flesh's province is signified by his mention of things of comfort and ease: flowers, spices, and other "deyntyys delycyas." The concern of all of Cyrus' children for their material comfort in receiving their bequests puts them in danger of falling victim to the Flesh, but Mary Magdalene's specific concern for her "covmfortyng" marks her as especially prone to his influence, as we will see.

The final allegorical tyrant, and the only one to directly refer to himself as a "sovereyn" in his opening speech, is the King of Devils. He reflects the concern for overweening power that is stated by the Emperor, Herod, and to a lesser extent Cyrus. Rather than signifying specific physical things such as the dress of characters or the wine and spices, the King of Devils instead signifies the ultimate goal of the actions of the other two allegorical tyrants: to bring souls into his grasp and condemn them to hell. He marks his position as the representative of temptation in the play by first laying out the

[311] Ibid., 339-347.

he will bring the "bolddest in bower" to bay with snares that "wher nevyr set at Troye" before concluding the speech with a direct statement of his intent: "I xal getyn hem from grace whersoeuyr he abyde-- / That body and sowle xal com to my hold, / Hym for to take!"[312] In the allegorical world of the play, souls are territory to be prized and the claims of the King of Devils on them are similar to those of the earthly tyrants regarding the territories supposedly under their control.

The significations of these allegorical tyrants also extend to the members of the Seven Deadly Sins they have under their control. The King of the World's scaffold is the home of Pride and Covetousness, the Flesh's scaffold the home of Lechery, Gluttony, and Sloth, and the King of Devil's scaffold the home of Wrath and Envy. This is interesting as the King of Devils makes a direct reference to Lucifer and his pride, but within the world of the play pride is not the pride of power and control, but instead pride in appearance and wealth. Nevertheless, the reference by the King of Devils, and the ways in which the earthly tyrants represent more than one sin, suggests that sin itself can be seen as a singular outcome with many possible paths. The result of sin is always damnation, but the cause of that damnation may be any one of a number of actions that map to the Seven Deadly Sins. The allegorical tyrants are not so much representatives of different spheres of sin, then, but of different ways to the same destination. The only difference in sinning is what sin you choose to signify your fall. Embracing one sin is effectively embracing them all, and that is what the next scene represents.

[312] Ibid., 363, 368, 370-372.

Rather than staying on their own scaffolds as the earthly tyrants do, the three allegorical tyrants gather together with their entourages. First the Devil approaches the World, who then sends his messenger, Sensuality, to the stage of the Flesh to bring him and his entourage. For the rest of this episode the three allegorical tyrants are together on a single scaffold, that of the World, in a visual representation of sin without differentiation. That they are intended to work in concert is obvious, as upon learning of the death of Cyrus and the possession of Magdalene Castle by Mary, the World states that "Yf she in vertu stylle may dwelle, / She xal byn abyll to dystroye helle"[313]

It is worth taking a moment to examine these lines before moving on to Mary Magdalene's temptation and fall, which will complete the episode. The King of the World and the King of Flesh never mention Christ, and the King of Devils will only mention Christ after the passion, in the later portion of the play. Instead, their attention is entirely focused on Mary Magdalene and her ability to destroy them should she remain in virtue. Furthermore, this virtue is represented by her investment of Magdalene Castle—the king of Devils explicates this by stating that his concern about Mary Magdalene is entirely because she "beryt þe pryse" of Magdalene Castle. Much like the titular Castle of Perseverance, the castle in this play is a physical representation of mankind's virtue as represented by Mary Magdalene, not the virtue of Christ. This focus on Mary Magdalene is similar to the way in which Bokenham focuses on Mary Magdalene as an intercessor who undertstands the nature of sin.

[313] Ibid., 419-420. Also see Bennett for an interesting analysis of this scene in terms of the Virgin Mary, the Second Eve formulation, and Bernardine religious thought.

As I discussed in the last chapter, because Mary Magdalene has sinned and found her way out of sin, Bokenham presents her as a means by which the average, everyday person can find his or her way out of sin as well. This signification is represented in the play: because Christ is Christ, and is inherently without sin, he cannot be used as this kind of example for the audience. Mary Magdalene, however, signifies the same faults—and conquest of those faults—as the allegorical figures of the other place and scaffold plays. Framing her journey in those terms also provides her with another level of signification by directly connecting her role as exemplar to the everyman figure already present in the more directly allegorical works. Likewise, the reference to her as "Mary" invites the audience to consider her in relation to the Virgin Mary, which will become an ongoing theme for the playwright throughout the work.

As Theresa Coletti notes, "one distinctive feature of the drama" produced by the intersection of the lay and monastic cultures "is a predilection for imagining the relevance of monastic contemplative ideals to 'every Christian life' in feminine symbols of spiritual progress."[314] She then discusses the Virgin Mary of the N-town plays as one of a number of female allegorical figures that model the journey of a contemplative for the lay audience. In addition, Coletti makes the point that the ways that medieval parish churches are constructed give us tantalizing glimpses of "lay and religious investments" in these allegorical female figures that can be considered as a "'theater of religious allegory.'"[315] Mary Magdalene, in her role as everyman in the Digby play, serves as a

[314] Coletti, *Drama of Saints*,105.
[315] Coletti, 72, Binski in Coletti 72.

representative of this religious allegory. As such, she takes on significations from the other female allegorical figures of East Anglian religious drama, including the Virgin Mary.

These significations, which operate in a manner akin to the Second Eve formulation mentioned in the last chapter, are what provide Mary Magdalene with the implied power to overcome hell. Neither *Everyman* nor *Mankind* suggests this kind of power for their everyman figures, and the Virgin Mary in N-Town is not subject to this sort of scrutiny by the forces of evil; instead, as the future mother of Christ she is continually signified as being above the possibility of corruption. Indeed, Mirk's *Festial* states that Christ "set hur þer by hym yn his trone, and crowned hur qwene of Heuen, and emp*er*ice of hell, and lady of al þe worlde."[316] It is this power over hell, at one remove, that causes the allegorical tyrants to be so concerned with Mary Magdalene. The authority that she gained through her signification, as represented by her *vita* in the *Legendys* and Abbotsford *Legenda*, has become an integral part of Mary Magdalene's character, and the two are intertwined.[317] The Virgin Mary does not have to be directly referenced, as she is in Bokenham, in order for some of her attributes to adhere to Mary Magdalene; instead, it is enough to refer to her simply as Mary, and allow the multiple significations attached to that first name to do the work of making the appropriate significations for the audience.

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[316] Erbe, 224.
[317] Consider as well the status of Mary Magdalene in heaven in the religious practice of Margery Kempe, and the way in which the Virgin acknowledges her special connection to Christ as mentioned in chapter one.

Since Mary Magdalene's position as an exemplar is to be uniquely efficacious against the devil's wiles through her own sin and redemption, the audience must see her sin and be redeemed. The concern regarding her possible destruction of hell gives ample reason to seek out her corruption, and the equivalency between Magdalene Castle and the castle of virtue means that her fall must be performed as a siege of that central castle. The episode is completed by the devils laying out their plan: Lechery will go in the guise of a servant seeking to be hired, and attend upon Mary Magdalene. Moreover, the Devil commands the Bad Angel to come forth from Hell, through the Hellmouth below his scaffold, and to tempt her "in euery plase." Meanwhile, the six remaining sins will "Wysely […] werke, hyr fawor to wynne, / To entyr hyr person be þe labor of lechery, /Þat she at þe last may com to helle."[318]

The playwright, by casting Mary Magdalene in particular as an everyman figure, is able to use her unique position as both a near-equal to the Virgin Mary and a figure of sin to create dramatic tension in the play that is not there in the other allegorical works containing everyman figures. In those plays, the stakes are the soul of the central protagonist—itself important because Everyman, Mankind, and *The Castle of Perseverance's* Humanum Genus represent both themselves and humanity as a whole. The *Mary Magdalene*, in going further, is asking the audience to read the saint not just as an everyman figure, but specifically an everyman figure that has powers akin to those of the Virgin Mary as well as Christ. Although it is Christ who performs the act of

[318] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 429, 431-434.

harrowing hell offstage later in the play, these lines imply that the multiple significations that rest in the figure of Mary Magdalene provide her with similar, if not equal powers.

Third Episode: Back to Reality

The third episode appears, at first glance, to be a continuation of the second, dealing with the temptation of Mary Magdalene. This temptation occurs within the castle, rather than outside of it as in *Perseverance*. According to the stage direction at 441, the Seven Deadly Sins "besege" Magdalene Castle—an action that appears to happen without any dialogue—and Lechery enters the castle along with the Bad Angel. After excessively flattering Mary Magdalene—words which "ravyssyt [her] to trankquelyte"[319]—she takes Lechery into her service and confides in her that she is filled with "grett heuynesse" due to the death of her father. It is because of this sadness over the death of her father that Lechery is able to convince her to leave Magdalene Castle and travel to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is where Mary Magdalene is finally tempted and the other sins are allowed to enter her. Our first glimpse of the city beyond Herod's Palace is the tavern, wherein a Taverner informs the audience of who he is and the quality of his wares. Since both Cyrus and the Emperor finished their opening boasts with a call for wine and spices and the Flesh's opening monologue makes a point of his control over "deyntyys delycyas," the tavern here is signified as a locus of temptation. Furthermore, considering that the other people involved in this episode are either Mary Magdalene, the Seven

[319] Ibid., 447.

Deadly Sins, or the Bad Angel, it may be that the Taverner is not what he seems but is instead Gluttony in disguise.

Regardless of whether the Taverner is human or allegorical, his role in this episode—like that of Lechery—is entirely supportive. The true agent of Mary Magdalene's temptation and downfall is, fittingly, Pride in the form of a gallant. In this form, he woos Mary Magdalene in words that speak of a careful self-construction. First, he denies any common roots by expressly stating that he is not a merchant while simultaneously drawing attention to his appearance—a "shert of reynnys wyth slevys peneawnt," doublet and hose that match, and careful shaving "for to seme ȝyng."[320] Second, his reference to the "lase of sylke" for his lady and his claims to disdain money reinforce his claim to be a person of means.[321] Through both his appearance and his claims, he is suggesting that he is a social equal to Mary Magdalene and thus a good match for her. However, this suggestion is problematic because he also claims to be in love with a constant lady, for whom he eschews money and for whom he sighs when not in her presence. This is not a chaste relationship of courtly romance, however—he also claims that when she returns he will "love much pleyyng," a reference to the act of intercourse.[322] Finally, he implies his real identity to the audience at the close of his opening speech, where he claims that he lives "in þis word […] for no pryde."[323]

Pride, then, is constructed here as someone overly concerned with appearances, akin to the construction of New-guise in *Mankind*. He is also someone who is concerned

[320] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 496, 502-503.
[321] Ibid., 497, 500.
[322] Ibid., 504.
[323] Ibid., 506.

with living in this world, instead of the world beyond this one. It is fitting, then, that this interaction is occurring in Jerusalem, because "þis word" is the earthly Jerusalem, as opposed to Heaven as the allegorical Jerusalem. Additionally, these words point out to the audience that the Seven Deadly Sins are active in the real world, as opposed to the world represented by the three allegorical tyrants. Lastly, by claiming "no pryde" at the end, he is foreshadowing that he is in fact a liar, which puts paid to his earlier statements regarding the constant lady and sets up his wooing of Mary Magdalene.

The earthly nature of Pride as the gallant—a stock disguise used by tempters throughout East Anglian allegorical drama—carries through to his wooing of Mary Magdalene. As Coletti has noted:

> Mary Magdalene's seduction is notably framed by a discussion of commodities on one end and by a spectacle of consumption on the other […] Emerging in the later Middle Ages as an icon of the "new profit-oriented urban economy," the tavern, in both literary and historical terms, gave material and semiotic prominence to commercial exchange as a central concern of vernacular, urban, mercantile culture.[324]

The playwright is using the tavern as a representation of the commodification of sin. By moving from Magdalene Castle, associated with aristocratic society, to the tavern that is associated with the urban merchant class, he is also shifting from the type of income that comes from traditional land ownership to the sort of income that comes from the buying

[324] Coletti, "Curtesy," 6. Those interested in a more detailed analysis of the Galant as a sign outside of his specific role in tempting Mary Magdalene would be rewarded by reading this article as well as the sixteenth-century *Treatise of a Gaulant*.

and selling of goods. The seduction of Mary Magdalene is framed in terms of a negotiation for a commodity to be bargained for, and Pride does so with gusto, opening with flattering words, noting her aristocratic position by calling her first "dewchasse" and then "prensses," and suggesting that she is "most of femynyte."[325] He is using the same sort of language we saw with the flattering attendants of the earthly and allegorical tyrants, and indeed the type of language that Luxury uses in luring Mary Magdalene to Jerusalem.

Mary Magdalene's concern at this point is not the overly flattering language—this is what she has heard throughout the play—but external appearances. She asks Pride "wene ȝe þat I were a kelle?" and "qwat cavse þat ȝe love me so soddenly?" both sensible questions when confronted with the force of Pride's ardor, before being convinced by his response that he cannot refrain from doing so—itself another flattering statement.[326] Her accepting reply, "curtesy doth it yow lere," not only concludes the negotiation but serves as the moment of her fall: accepting his flattering and ultimately superficial words means that she has opened her heart to pride, and thus has fallen.[327]

The rest of the scene, with its dancing, sops in wine, and eventually the departure of the two to consummate their assignation, represents the shift in power gained through Pride's "purchase" of Mary Magdalene through flattery. Rather than making her own decisions, even with the rather poor advice of Lechery, she is willing to be entirely controlled by Pride. She presents her loss of agency first when she agrees to dance with

[325] Baker, Murphy, and Hall.,515, 521, 516.
[326] Ibid., 520, 523.
[327] Ibid., 528.

him because "a man at alle tymys beryt reverens," and then when she answers "as ȝe don, so doth me" to Pride's asking her if she likes sops in wine.[328] Mary Magdalene at this point in the play is a nonentity—her identity as an aristocrat and landowner is gone, replaced by whatever Pride wishes her to be. As the everyman figure, this is the low point where she is most steeped in sin. Placing the scene in a tavern not only commodifies this fall, but also makes the danger and the intentions of the various sins readily apparent to an audience trained to consider the signification of the tavern as a place of sin as opposed to the castle as a place of virtue.

Moreover, note here that she is not referenced by name once, but first by her titles and then by endearments. This is the beginning of the loss of her name that Jacobus mentions. She will not regain her name until well into the apostolic portion of the play, but for now it is worth keeping in mind that she is an entirely blank slate at this point. Upon reporting back to the three allegorical tyrants, the Bad Angel underscores her current malleable state by noting that "pryde, callyd Corioste, to hure is ful lavdabyll" and that "she hath gravnttyd hym all hys bonys."[329] Interestingly, the King of Devils has not forgotten her position as an aristocrat, stating that she is "is a soveryn servant þat hath hure fet in synne" and reinforcing her particularly important status by insisting that "al helle xall make reioysseyng" at her fall into sin.[330]

Mary Magdalene at this point in the play is beginning to differentiate—there is the allegorical everyman figure, which is the aforementioned tabula rasa, and there is the

[328] Ibid., 533.
[329] Ibid., 550, 552.
[330] Ibid., 556, 559.

actual figure from salvation history, whose status is only remembered by the allegorical tyrants. In the next episode, this allegorical figure will cease to be an important element of the play, and the events will transition into the biblical account.

Fourth Episode: From Everyman to Exemplar

Unlike the first three episodes of the play, which have presented Mary Magdalene as an everyman figure in keeping with allegorical dramas such as *Perseverance* and differed greatly in content from both Jacobus and Bokenham, this episode closely follows the account already discussed in Chapter Two. Because of this, I believe it will be most useful to note those places where the play differs from Jacobus and Bokenham and consider what those differences might mean for the construction of Mary Magdalene as a sign within the play.

The episode opens with Mary Magdalene in an arbor, itself possibly representative of the garden in *La Roman de la Rose* but definitely representative of the influence of the Flesh, who announced himself as "florychyd in [his] flowers." Mary Magdalene herself suggests this analogy, noting that her "valentynys" are "bote for a blossom of blysse" and that she herself will rest amongst "bamys precyus of prysse."[331] If the Arbor is an outpost of the Flesh, then Mary Magdalene is his agent, tempting others as she herself was tempted in turn. The Good Angel also comments along these lines, stating first that the bliss she mentions will be bought bitterly, and that she is "aȝens God."[332] Since Mary Magdalene is malleable at this point in the play, thanks to

[331] Ibid., 564, 566, 569.
[332] Ibid., 589-590.

the influence of the Seven Deadly Sins, she agrees with the Good Angel and sees the error of her ways, announcing that she will "porsue þe Prophett wherso he be" with "swete bawmys."[333] The Arbor's final purpose, then, is to provide the balm that Jacobus has her buy to take to Christ.

During this exchange, Simon the Leper introduces the biblical thread of Mary Magdalene's *vita* by beginning a short speech in his own location announcing that he wishes Christ to come to dinner with him. Christ's appearance and the dinner in Simon the Leper's house proceeds largely as it does in Bokenham. Moreover, Mary Magdalene's moment of contrition is framed similarly to that used in Bokenham's version of her *vita*:

> O I, cursyd cayftyff, þat myche wo hath wrowth
> Aȝens my makar, of mytys most!
> I have offendyd hym wyth dede and thowth,
> But in hys grace is all my trost,
> Or ellys I know well I am but lost,
> Body and sowle damdpnyd perpetuall!
> Ȝet, good Lord of lorddys, my hope [is] perhenuall
> Wyth þe to stond in grace and fawour to se;
> Thow knowyst my hart and thowt in especyal--
> Therfor, good Lord, aftyr my hart reward me![334]

As in Bokenham's *Lyf*, she first acknowledges her role as a sinner, but here she also implies that she is someone who has helped to bring others into sin before concluding

[333] Ibid., 610, 613.
[334] Ibid., 631-640.

with an expression of her contrition and her desire to be forgiven. What explains that this is a similar rhetorical move to the way that her contrition is presented by Bokenham is the final two lines, where she states that it is not the words she is speaking for the audience's benefit that matters, but Christ's inward knowledge of her heart.

Of the two versions of the anointing, the play only includes that in Luke 7:36-50, avoiding the need to recount both versions that Bokenham and the *South English Ministry and Passion* follow. Since there's no indication of an Augustinian connection between the play and the two texts—a criterion that both the *Legendys* and the *South English Ministry and Passion* meet—this is unsurprising. What is surprising is that the play follows the version in Luke rather than that in John, as the *Northern Passion* and *Southern Passion* do. As mentioned in the last chapter, the primary impulse amongst versions of the anointing appears to be either to give the account in John, to give both accounts, or to give a very truncated version of the anointing that avoids the issue of having to choose between the two versions at all. Furthermore, by choosing the version with Simon rather than that with Judas, the playwright misses an opportunity to cut down on the number of disciples cast (if we assume that the play was staged with the entire complement) and to frame Judas as an unrepentant sinner in opposition to Mary Magdalene's penitence.

That missed opportunity suggests that in the late fifteenth century the version of the anointing in Luke was more important in terms of Mary Magdalene's life than that in John. Certainly the one in John occurs after the one in Luke, if both Augustine and the scripture are to be believed, and the way the anointing is framed does not fit the structure

of the play. As you will recall, Bokenham stated that Mary Magdalene was inflamed with grace when she performed the anointing recounted in John, rather than penitent. The account in John also does not suggest that she was penitent at this point, but instead rather matter of factly states "Maria ergo accepit libram unguenti nardi pistici pretiosi. Unxit pedes Iseu"[335] ["Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus"]. So from a simple narrative standpoint, the account in Luke presents Mary Magdalene as a penitent better than that in John.

There is another impulse at work, however. The account in Luke closes with Christ stating that the disciples will not always have him, words that echo in Matthew and Mark with a stronger emphasis on the association with Mary Magdalene as the anointer of Christ rather than on the woman herself as a symbol. In Luke the focus stays on the woman, and since the play is utilizing the emphasized status of the saint that we saw Bokenham push forward, it makes better narrative sense to choose a version in the play that more strongly adheres to Mary Magdalene's status as an exemplar. That she is an everyman figure in this portion of the play also means that she must be forgiven by God, and the account in Luke better shows that forgiveness than that in John. However, the scriptural account in Luke concludes with the people present at the dinner questioning who Christ is, asking "quis est hic qui etiam peccata dimittit" [336] ["who is this man, who even forgives sins"] before Christ tells Mary Magdalene, "vade in pace."

[335] John 12:3. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.
[336] Luke 7:49. Translation New Jerusalem Bible.

In the play, this questioning is entirely omitted. Instead, Mary Magdalene makes a speech, stating

> O, blessyd be þou, Lord of euyrlastyng lyfe,
> And blyssyd be þi berth of þat puer vergynne!
> Blyssyd be þou, repast contemplatyf,
> Aȝens my seknes, helth and medsyn!
> And for þat I haue synnyd in þe synne of pryde,
> I wol enabyte me wyth humelyte.
> Aȝens wrath and envy, I wyll devyde
> Thes fayur vertuys, pacyens and charyte.[337]

Here, Mary Magdalene states directly that Christ is her "repast contemplatyf," which is an echo of the way she is framed in Augustine and suggests that the construction of the saint that Bokenham's version of her *vita* takes part in has become the standard discourse regarding her, especially since there is no evidence that this play comes from an Augustinian source. It also suggests that the playwright was well aware of the "optimam partem" discussion by Augustine, if not through the Latin then through English sources such as Love and Bokenham. He is here reminding the audience that she has chosen the better part, and that in choosing that contemplative part she is healed—again something that resonates with Bokenham's word choices in describing her. Moreover, the fact that this is occurring in spoken dialogue suggests that the Augustinian notion of Mary Magdalene as feasting on Christ's wisdom became part of lay thinking regarding her to the point where the playwright could insert these words into Mary

[337] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 678-685.

Magdalene's mouth and expect the audience to follow the thinking from contemplation to the logic of Augustine's argument (even if they themselves were unaware of the source) to "optimam partem."

Another note of signification is that Mary Magdalene's speech of contrition mentions Pride, who was responsible for her falling into sin, as well as the two sins associated with the King of Devils in the play—Wrath and Envy. The former is invoked because of the circumstances of her fall, but the invocation of Wrath and Envy may be seen as a direct rebuke of the Devil as the spiritual tempter, and an indication that Mary Magdalene has dedicated her life to Christ.

The speech by Christ analogous to Luke 7:50 also makes reference to the aspects of Mary Magdalene signified by Jacobus in the "De Nomine" portion of her *vita*. He first notes that "in contryssyon [Mary is] expert"—acknowledging the purpose of her speech before washing his feet in both Bokenham and the play, before stating that she "from therknesse has porchasyd lyth," a reference to the multiple signification of "Maria" in the "De Nomine" portion of the *Legenda*.[338] Moreover, in a more direct analogue to Luke 7:50, Christ tells her that Mary Magdalene's faith "hath savyt þe" before going on to reference the inner light that Jacobus notes, saying that her faith has also made her "bryth."[339] It is at this point that he states, "vade in pace," upon which "seuyn dyllys xall dewoyde from þe woman, and the Bad Angyll entyr into hell wyth thondyr."[340] By having the sins leave at these words, the playwright is visually underscoring the

[338] Ibid., 686, 689.
[339] Ibid., 690.
[340] Ibid., 691, 691 s.d.

relationship between the anointing and confession that Bokenham lays out in his words. It is not until the command to "go in peace"—something that any churchgoing playgoer would have been familiar with—that the forgiveness that Christ offers Mary Magdalene takes true effect.

The rest of the episode deals then with finishing the allegorical elements of the play. Mary Magdalene and Christ both have speeches, with Mary Magdalene noting that Christ has saved her from her "whanhope," or despair. She also reveals that her speech of contrition was only for the benefit of the audience, stating that Christ knew her thoughts "wythowttyn ony dowth."[341] Finally, she makes the direct scriptural connection between Christ and Isaiah 9:6, marshaling a scriptural authority to reinforce the words that she uses to describe Christ's power in the prior lines. Christ, for his part, underscores the role of contrition in penance, stating that "wyth contryssyon [Mary Magdalene] hast mad a recumpens," saving her soul "from all dystresse."[342] He also makes clear to the audience that the price of salvation is eternal vigilance, stating that in order to be "partenyr of my blysse" Mary Magdalene must keep "from all neclygens."[343] Finally, the Good Angel concludes with a miniature sermon that the stage direction suggests is meant to be "reioysyng of Mawdleyn" but instead seems to be asking Christ's guidance for the entire audience.[344]

If the *Mary Magdalene* were simply an allegorical play, this is where it would end, but since it has now transitioned to Mary Magdalene's scriptural history, the

[341] Ibid., 696.
[342] Ibid., 701-702.
[343] Ibid., 704, 703.
[344] Ibid., 704 s.d., 705-721.

playwright has to remove the allegorical figures from the playing space. He does so by having the Bad Angel, as well as the seven deadly sins, punished by devils and placed into a house set upon the stage above Hellmouth. This signals to the audience that the allegorical episode is over. If the house of Simon the Leper is in Bethany, then it should be near Magdalene Castle, and because of this, the episode is not intended to cover Mary Magdalene's travel to the castle. The Good Angel's speech could do that. Instead, it is a visual representation of a turning point, and from here out the play will be more firmly grounded in scriptural and legendary material. As such, Mary Magdalene is not serving as an everyman figure anymore. Instead the exchange between her and Christ, and the Good Angel's closing sermon, signal to us that she is now an exemplar. She is not, however, yet an apostle nor is she *the* exemplar that Bokenham presents her as. The scriptural material of the next episode will begin to build her up in that way.

Fifth Episode: Lazarus' Death, Martha and the Raising

One place where the construction of Mary Magdalene that Bokenham promoted in his *vita* of her does not appear to be reflected in the play is in the events surrounding the raising of Lazarus. As I mentioned last chapter, Bokenham reduced the role of both Lazarus and Martha to the point where the singularly most important interaction between Jesus and Martha, his question of her whether she considers him the "resurrection and the life," is only obliquely referenced as "a long dalyau*n*ce."

Because the events of the play are performed, they are already more present to the viewer than the events in Bokenham are to the reader since they are occurring visually rather than through text. The performance is closer to experienced reality, and

for that reason more conveys the entirety of the network of ideas surrounding the saint to the reader through the mediation of the network surrounding each viewer with that of the other playgoers, the performers, and of the playwright's narrative. This is especially true prior to the existence of the fourth wall indicating a differentiation between the audience and the acting on stage. Having Mary Magdalene return to the castle and not addressing how her siblings react to this would seem odd to the viewer and cause the ideas regarding the saint to be questioned.

The playwright addresses the possible moment of punctualization by having Mary Magdalene return to the castle, where her siblings have been during the course of the allegorical events of the play, and tell them that Christ "hathe made me clene and delectary," absolving her of sin.[345] However, interestingly she again makes reference to the "oyle of mercy," implying that Christ's grace is itself a balm akin to the oil Mary Magdalene used to anoint Christ.[346] Rather than having her carry an alabastrum to signify her status, that visual attribute shown in depictions of her is conveyed verbally by this reference to the oil of mercy.

First Martha, then Lazarus responds to her return with four-line speeches praising Christ for bringing her back to them and declaring their fealty to Christ. Martha says, "Now worchepyd be þat hey name Jhesu," while Lazarus says that he "wyl serve [Christ] wyth honour."[347] These speeches are interesting in terms of the earlier discussion regarding Mary Magdalene and her siblings, because they directly indicate

[345] Ibid., 751.
[346] Ibid., 759.
[347] Ibid., 760, 766.

that the siblings come to worship Christ because of Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene responds with a prayer not for herself, as she did before the anointing, but by beginning a prayer that includes both herself, her siblings, and by implication the audience:

> Cryst, þat is þe lyth and þe cler daye,
> He hath oncuryd þe therknesse of þe dowdy nyth,
> Of lyth þe lucens and lyth veray,
> Wos prechyng to vs is a gracyows lyth,
> Lord, we beseche þe, as þou art most of myth,
> Owt of þe ded slep of therknesse, defend vs aye!
> Gyff vs grace ewyr to rest in lyth,
> In quyet and in pes to serve þe, nyth and day.[348]

The exchange here reflects in some ways Bokenham's reconfiguration of the relationship between Christ and the three siblings as a result of the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ, rather than as the result of individual relationships between the three. It also presages her preaching in the later portion of the play in a way that makes the authorization of that preaching the result of the "light" that Christ has placed within her, in reflection of Jacobus' words. Furthermore, as Theresa Coletti notes, Mary Magdalene's preaching at this point thematically carries through from that of Christ at the anointing, using metaphors of sickness and health to discuss the notion of spiritual redemption.[349] The language could represent the incorporation of both Mary Magdalene and her siblings into Christ's network of apostles, but I believe that the intentional thematic connection also serves as a representation of why the Mary Magdalene of the

[348] Ibid., 768-775.
[349] Coletti, *Drama of Saints*, 39-40.

play is authorized to preach at a time when women were actively barred from it: the healing associated with Christ's grace has given her the ability to transcend the limitations of her gender—something that will be alluded to in the language of the legendary portion of the play.

Mary Magdalene's sermon is followed by Lazarus' death, where he first calls for his sisters and then immediately seems to accept that he is going to die, calling for Christ to be his guide and declaring that he is not long for this world. In response, Mary Magdalene completes her sermon, asking him to "lett away all þis feyntnesse and fretth" before promising him "leches" to reduce his pain. Interestingly, it is Martha who suggests that they go to Christ rather than to doctors. This shift between Bokenham and the play in who sends for Christ may be the result first of Bokenham's plan to build Mary Magdalene up as an exemplar, but also because in the scripture Martha is referenced specifically by the verse prior to his learning of Lazarus' sickness, while Mary Magdalene is stated to be her sister.[350]

Despite it being Martha's idea, it is Mary Magdalene who speaks when the sisters meet up with Christ to inform him of their brother's illness. Again, this is an interpolation in the narrative from the playwright in order to make the events of the play hang together for the audience. Scripturally, we are not told who informs Christ of the sickness of Lazarus, and so the playwright has the two sisters do it to preserve an economy of character. Moreover, this gives Mary Magdalene a chance to model the

[350] John 11:5.

proper way to address a prayer to Christ. She first sends him praise, then asks him to "comfort þi creatur þat to þe crye" and to "onbynd" Lazarus "of hys heuynesse."[351]

Christ's response, while taken as an affirmation that he will aid Lazarus by Mary Magdalene, actually is more complex. Christ first recounts the mystery of death, stating that it "is impossible / to vndyrestond be reson" before invoking the heavenly Jerusalem. Finally, he gives one line each to the three parts of the Trinity as they will appear once the supplicant is in heaven before letting the women know that he shall send his grace to Lazarus. Rather than what Mary Magdalene takes it to mean, Christ is actually letting the audience know that the cares of this world are nothing in comparison to the joy and work that awaits them in the heavenly Jerusalem—something that will become important after Christ's death, when Heaven appears as a physical location in the performance space above the earthly Jerusalem.

Upon the return to Magdalene Castle, Lazarus dies and is buried in his tomb, accompanied by the two soldiers of Herod's court—themselves representative of Lazarus' status as lord of Jerusalem and a soldier, both of his sisters, and a number of weepers. Upon burial, the congregation retreats to Magdalene Castle, and Christ comes with his disciples to the tomb. These events play out very much like those in John, but rather than being alone in quiet contemplation, as Bokenham frames her as being, Mary Magdalene in the play is attended by others. Furthermore, once Christ comes Martha is notified and runs to him, playing out the "resurrection and the life" portion of the raising of Lazarus as we might expect from scripture, with Christ stating explicitly that he is "þe

[351] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 797-801.

resurreccyon of lyfe" and then asking "Martha, belevyst thow þis?"[352] Mary then runs to Jesus, rather than being told of his arrival by her sister, and the stage directions indicate she "xall falle" at his feet, which is what occurs in Jacobus but not in Bokenham.[353]

Bokenham's attempted reconfiguration of the exchange between Martha and Christ regarding Lazarus in order to center events entirely on Mary Magdalene thus failed to carry through to the larger networks of people and ideas involved in the production of the play. Instead, the events carry out much like they do in Jacobus, and the three siblings are much more equal than Bokenham would have them be. Mary Magdalene is given speeches in the interpolated material where Martha is not and she appears as a preacher, but she is not appearing as a singular exemplar at this point. The raising occurs in an entirely orthodox way, and the biblical material concludes in much the same was as the allegorical, with Christ repeating "vade in pace" before leaving the Place.

Sixth Episode: Introducing the Legendary and Dispatching to the Devil

Jacobus mentions the Passion in passing during the set of free-floating references he uses regarding Mary Magdalene, stating "que iuxta crucem in domini passione fuit"[354] ["who stood next to the cross at the passion"], but neither the *South English Legendary* nor Bokenham's version of her *vita* follow Jacobus in doing this. Instead, they transition directly to the visitation at the tomb. In order for the play to follow suit, it needs to demonstrate to the audience that a transition occurs. The playwright does so in

[352] Ibid., 881, 884.
[353] Ibid., 888 s.d.
[354] Jacobus, 32.

this short episode by first introducing the King of Marseilles as a tyrant on par with the three earthly tyrants or Cyrus, complete with references to the audience as "blabyr-lyppyd bycchys," declarations of his power as an "enperower," and references to his queen as an object of desire that parallel those of the Flesh towards Lechery.[355] He concludes his speech with a call for wine and spices, an act that the audience is already primed to recognize as that of a character in charge of a large geographic area from the speeches of Cyrus and the Emperor earlier in the play.[356]

Rather than continuing with Marseilles, or returning to Mary Magdalene, however, the play turns to Hell, where the King of Devils appears, crying "owt, owt, harrow!" as an attention-grabbing device for the audience.[357] Rather than making a bold claim of his power, as it is for the tyrants in the earlier portion of the play or for the King of Marseilles' cry of "avaunt" in his speech immediately prior, the King of Devils cries out because Christ has "entyryd in" to hell, breaking the iron bars and brass gates, and "lytynnyd limbo." The reference here is meant to indicate that limbo is no longer filled with "Adam and Abram and all hyre kynred," but the verb used to describe Christ's action, "lytynnyd," also suggests the light of Christ that passed through him into Mary Magdalene. It is this light that authorizes her preaching upon her return to Magdalene Castle. Moreover, Christ's actions has made the devils "thrall þat frest wher fre / Be þe

[355] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 925-945.
[356] Ibid., 962.
[357] Ibid., 963.

passion of hys manhede." The King of Devils goes on to state that this has already occurred "syn Freyday at none" and that Christ is risen and gone to Galilee.[358]

Also in this phrase is some indication as to why the opening scenes with the earthly tyrants exist, for the Devil states that "wyth many a temtacyon we tochyd him to atrey / to know whether he was God ore non."[359] The audience has not seen these temptations, but what we have seen are the temptations of Mary Magdalene and her return to a state of grace through the intervention of Christ. In the narrative reality of the play Christ destroys hell, not Mary Magdalene, but we as viewers are meant to see her actions as an *imitatio Christi* by this point in the play. It is in the service of that *imitatio* that she is allowed to preach and it is why the King of Marseilles is introduced at this point—he serves as a reflection of the earthly tyrants that were concerned with Christ at the beginning of the play, and in dealing with him Mary Magdalene will show herself to be Christ-like in her actions.

The speech by the King of Devils allows the Passion to be referenced, as it is in Jacobus, without actually needing to show the Passion. However, this creates a narrative issue since the next episode will show both the cross and Christ's tomb, both of which should not be visible on stage prior to this point. The two speeches, both drawing the attention of the audience to different locations, allow the playwright to take the practical need to distract the audience and put it into the service of the narrative, signifying Mary Magdalene in ways that allow her to draw upon parts of Christ's signification in the

[358] Ibid., 963-980.
[359] Ibid., 983-984.

development of her own. It is these aspects, which transcend her gender, that allow her to perform the transgressive act of preaching both here and later in the work.

Seventh Episode: Christ at the Tomb

After the speech of the King of Devils, the action finally returns to Jerusalem, with Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobi, and Mary Salome entering "wyth sygnis of þe passion pryntyd ypon þer brest." It should be noted, especially considering the discussion of what Theresa Coletti terms as a "rivalry" between Mary Magdalene and Margery Kempe, that the three Marys are here dressed in white pilgrim's outfits akin to those worn by virgins and by Margery Kempe when she went on pilgrimage. This is for good reason, as in travelling towards the Sepulchre they are performing a prototype of the pilgrimage to the stations that the King of Marseilles undertakes later in the play and which the audience might undertake at some point in their lives.[360] They make this explicit through their language: Mary Magdalene recounts "here he turnyd aȝen to þe woman of Jerusalem / And for wherynesse lett þe crosse falle" and Mary Jacobe adds "here þe Jevys spornyd hym to make hym goo, / And þey dyspyttyd þer Kyng ryall" before all three women approach the Cross, hailing it in unison with "Heylle, gloryows cross! Þou baryst þat Lord on hye."[361] As Jerome Bush notes, by marking these locations they

[360] Ibid, 993-1014. See also Boehnen for an analysis of the play in terms of pilgrimage, with connections being made between the dress of the three women and contemporary pilgrim's dress. Also worth noting is Coletti's analysis of the actual dress of the women, rather than the symbology of the pilgrim badges they carry, as signifying their status as "chast" women. See *Drama of Saints,* 50-54. This depiction of the three Marys with symbols of contemporary fifteenth-century spirituality also makes it more likely that the Sepulchure and Lazarus' Tomb were contemporary stone tomb chests.

[361] Baker, Murphy, and Hall 995-996, 1005. The line at 1005 is also very similar to the language used in

> do not so much point to the ground upon which Christ walked as they point to their faith and their acceptance of God. They dramatize their faith by showing us the bond between the visible and the invisible. Although they know the ground is sacred, the audience, which cannot recognize the platea as such, sees their faith instead. Christ localizes in their hearts and in their active retracing of Christ's steps. Their pointing dramatizes this localization through faith.[362]

Furthermore, this action—when combined with the Harrowing of Hell—signifies the importance of the Passion for the audience without making a performed representation of the Passion itself necessary. By signifying the Passion in this way they are explaining that the act of pilgrimage is necessary to understand it fully. Their dress and their acting out of pilgrimage indicate to the audience that these figures are not performing a static historical drama, but rather a lived expression of faith in which the audience in turn is invited to participate. Additionally, by concluding at the Cross and hailing it in unison, the three Marys also demonstrate that there is a physical representation of the cross on the performance space as a visual focus for the faith of the characters as well as the audience. In hailing the cross and connecting it to elements of the Passion, they show that this representation signifies events that occurred within Jerusalem during the Passion, connecting the play space to the earthly Jerusalem and through that to the heavenly Jerusalem. Furthermore, the fourteenth station of the Cross—the laying of

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the *Meditaciones* to describe the same moment. See the translation of Johannis, 302, on page 19.
[362] Bush, 145.

Christ in his tomb—is represented by the Sepulchre as defined and signified to the audience by the speech of the three Marys in lines 1015-1132.

At this point, the three Marys are told by angels that Christ is no longer at his tomb, with the first angel specifically stating, "Go, sey to hys dysypyllys and to Petur he xall apere." This reflects Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermo 75* much more closely than Jacobus, as all three of the Marys are present and Primus Angelus requests that all three women go tell the disciples that Christ is risen. Nowhere in this sequence, however, are the women referred to as *aspostolae apostolorum*. In order for the events at the tomb to have the scriptural significance necessary for the audience to accept Mary Magdalene's *vita* as the playwright presents it, she must go to the disciples. The version of events in the play has problems when compared against the versions in Bokenham or Jacobus, however.

Bokenham includes "a-nothyr Marye,"[363] who accompanies Mary Magdalene to the tomb but leaves the grave once the angel speaks to them and tells them that Christ is gone. This leaves Mary alone at the tomb, allowing the *hortulanus* scene to proceed without any narrative difficulty. Likewise, Jacobus states that Mary does not leave the tomb, but does not go into depth regarding the *hortulanus* other than to state that Mary is the one to whom Christ first appeared, presumably at that moment. Because the playwright has the angel, rather than Christ, tell the women to inform the disciples of the resurrection, the significance of the phrase is blunted. Moreover, all three Marys leave the tomb to get Peter and John, rather than just Mary Jacobi and Mary Salome. Once

[363] Bokenham, 5700.

they have found them, Peter and John take a moment to reinforce Christ's signification, with John noting Christ's "wovndys wyde" and Peter "the sorrow and peyne þat he ded drye / For ower offens and abomynacyon"—coupled with reminders by John that Christ serves as a "gyde" for the soul and by Peter that he took "no hede to hys techeyng and exortacyon"[364]—before returning with the Marys to the tomb.

The events of the play's narrative structure hold much more closely to the events in John than in any of the other Gospels. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the angel appears and tells the Marys to inform the disciples that Christ is waiting for them in Galilee. John, however, has Mary go to Peter and "ille ailus discipulus" ["that other disciple"] and tell them that Christ is missing from the tomb. The two disciples run towards the tomb, discover the grave linens, and return to their homes. Mary, alone, stays before the tomb and sees the risen Christ. In the play, however, the two disciples do not race towards the tomb but instead make their speeches regarding Christ. The playwright does this for the same reason that he has the Marys signify which locations in the play space represent the stations—so that later on, when Mary is preaching before the King of Marseilles, we understand that the words she uses have authority beyond the fact that a woman is speaking them. Although Christ's touch has allowed Mary to transcend the limitations of her gender, that gender is still part of the set of ideas surrounding her and must be pushed back against in order for her words to have the efficacy the playwright desires.

[364] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 1042-1044, 1040, 1046.

The *hortulanus* itself is confusing when the scriptural account is considered. Neither John, Peter, nor the two Marys leave the tomb upon discovery. Instead, Mary states that she "may no lengar abyde, / For dolour and dyssese þat in my hartt doth dwell,"[365] indicating that she is moving away from the rest of the party. The events occur as they do in John—the angels ask Mary why she is crying, she informs them it is because she wishes to know who has taken away Christ, Christ appears before her in the guise of a gardener she does not recognize, and requests that she inform the disciples that he is risen—the same command given to the women before. What is different about this scene, however, is the way that the mistaken identity is resignified in order to increase Christ's majesty. Christ is the gardener of souls, and within "mannys hartt" he sows

> sedys of vertu all þe yere.
> Þe fowle wedys and wycys I reynd vp be þe rote!
> Whan þat gardyn is watteryd wyth terys clere,
> Than spryng vertuus, and smelle full sote.[366]

This statement by Christ directly connects the allegorical events we have just seen concerning Mary Magdalene with the scriptural events that are being portrayed here. Christ as gardener rooted out the vices from Mary Magdalene, and her tears watered the garden of contrition, allowing the virtues to spring forth. The audience is expected to understand that what we have seen as allegorical events interspersed throughout the

[365] Ibid, 1056-1057.
[366] Ibid., 1082-1085.

historical are in fact the same temptations that occur in every man's heart throughout history, which Mary Magdalene and Christ explicate in the remainder of their exchange. Mary Magdalene expressly states that Christ's words—and more importantly, the "knowlege of [his] devyte"—are not just for her, but for "all pepull þat aftyr vs xall reyngne." In response, Christ states that he will "shew to synnars" if they are "stedfast" and "meke," and follow Mary Magdalene's example.[367]

These words reveal to the audience as an example the Mary Magdalene of Bokenham—the penitent sinner who becomes the exemplar especially efficacious when it comes to dealing with the wiles of the devil. Her construction in the play relies on authority every bit as much as Bokenham's construction of her, but it is an authority based on the understanding of allegorical tropes and salvation history. By associating her with the everyman trope the playwright associates her with everyone in the audience regardless of gender, and the playwright's emphasis on the interactions between Mary Magdalene and Christ center on the light that he places inside of her, so enabling the prohibition against preaching by women to be overcome. Mary Magdalene is not just a woman at this point—she is humankind.

The final portion of the episode attempts to reconcile the conflicting scriptural accounts of this event by including the events in Matthew and Mark. Mary Magdalene returns to the other Marys after seeing Christ, and they go to tell "ower Lady dere" and the other Disciples of the resurrection. The Marys' action here shows both the importance of the Virgin Mary amongst the disciples and the way in which the various

[367] Ibid., 1087-1095.

Marys were intertwined in late medieval thought, as I have recounted in the introduction. Christ appears and hails the women as they leave, marking this specifically as the account in Matthew 28:9. This second appearance is superfluous, however, since the Marys already know where Christ is risen and that he is in Galilee. Instead, the playwright connects this second appearance to Christ's promise to Mary Magdalene-as-everyman. He states that he is appearing "to shew desyrows hartys I am full nere," which suggests to the audience that they too—if they believe fervently enough—can have as close a connection to Christ.[368] Additionally, this sequence is used to burnish Mary Magdalene's credentials as a preacher. Mary Salome asks Christ to "gravntt vs þi blyssyng of þi hye deyte, / gostly ower sowlys for to sosteynne" and Christ does so, saying

> Alle tho byn blyssyd þat sore refreynne.
> We blysch yow-Father, and Son, and Holy Gost--
> All sorow and care to constryne,
> Be ower powyr of mytys most,
> In nomine Patrys ett Felii et Spiritus Sancti, amen![369]

before requesting that the go to inform the Disciples that he will be in Galilee. Mary Magdalene, not Mary Salome, responds to this in similar language, framing her response as a prayer:

[368] Ibid., 1110.
[369] Ibid., 1116-1120.

O þou gloryus Lord of heuen regyon,
Now blyssyd be þi hye devynyte,
Thatt evyr thow tokest incarnacyon,
Thus for to vesyte þi pore servantys thre.
Þi wyll, gracyows Lord, fulfyllyd xall be
As þou commavndyst vs in all thyng.
Ower gracyows brethryn we woll go se,
Wyth hem to seyn all ower lekeyng.[370]

This episode, and the biblical section of the play, concludes with Mary Magdalene performing a prayer in a similar manner to Christ's benediction, modeling her response off of his in terms of how the speech is structured—prayer, then relevant narrative material. The playwright is using the structural elements of the speech to make the connection between Christ and Mary Magdalene in their role as priest explicit for the audience.

Eighth Episode: Mary Magdalene as *Apostelesse*

The sermon by Mary Magdalene marks the close of the portion of the play modeled on the events of scriptural history and, much like the transition between the allegorical and biblical elements, the episode is marked by speeches and actions by the earthly tyrants. In this case, the King of Marseilles is introduced as he is in Jacobus, announcing to his court that he intends "to do a sacryfyce" to "Mahond," which is in keeping with the version of events in the *South English Legendary* but not that of Bokenham or Jacobus. His wife accompanies him, and both of them stress that the

[370] Ibid., 1125-1132.

sacrifice will be done with "myrth," the Queen going so far as to suggest that minstrels will be involved.[371]

Narratively, this speech is out of place just as the King of Marseilles' first speech was. In Jacobus, the King of Marseilles analogue does not appear until after Mary Magdalene and the other disciples have taken shelter under the steps of the heathen temple. Here, though, Mary Magdalene has just received Christ's blessing and is still in Jerusalem. The King's speech serves to distract the audience, directing their attention to what will be the focus of the next portion of the play and away from the holy land, where the bulk of the play has been up to this point. The long episode of blessing, with the Presbyter and his Clerk indeed offering "myrth," does not appear at first to be anything but a space and time filler, but it serves an important example for the audience.

As is common in late medieval drama, Islam is presented as a corrupted or funhouse mirror reflection of Christianity. The two religious men swear by "Sentt Coppyn," and apparently bed the same women.[372] Neither of them seem particularly interested in their religious vocation, since the Clerk assumes that the Prysbyster calls for him to bring a woman to him, and neither of them is ready for the arrival of the King and Queen to perform their sacrifice. Moreover, The Presbyter is so fat from eating gruel that his stomach has grown "grett as þe dywll of hell," a condition that the Clerk claims renders him unable to ride a horse for fear of breaking its back.[373] Besides the social critique of church practices commonly thought of when representations of Islam and

[371] Ibid., 1136, 1141.
[372] Ibid., 1151.
[373] Ibid., 1157.

Judaism appear on stage in the Middle Ages, these two figures specifically represent the sins of the Flesh. Presenting them in this manner not only provides the audience with some levity, but also shows the audience that Mary Magdalene will be working in opposition to those sins that she has already overcome. Her preaching in the legendary portion of the play will represent a positive exemplar in comparison to the negative example of these figures.

The service that the Clerk performs is a parody of contemporary religious practice. This would have made the service familiar enough to the audience for them to recognize it as a religious service, while emphasizing the corrupted nature of stage Islam when compared to contemporary religious belief. Moreover, the actual service—composed at first of real Latin but soon drifting into alliterative nonsense words spoken by the clerk—hides allusions to werewolves and bodily functions before finishing with a four lines that appear to be an invocation (and themselves hold an allusion to Ragnelle). These half-familiar sounds within what is otherwise nonsense, provided structure by the familiarity of religious practice, would have connected the events on stage to both religious belief and the network of folk beliefs that made up the day to day fabric of fifteenth century East Anglians.

While visual as opposed to performative, a similar impulse can be seen in the Cloisters of Norwich Cathedral, where the roof bosses of the eastern row of the Cloisters—where it would be farthest removed from the cathedral and close to the "dark entry door" leading out into the gardens—are composed of monsters, vegetative motifs, and representations of the Green Man, rather than the religious stories of the other rows.

Similarly, the first portion of the Queen Mary Psalter consists of a bestiary in the same bas-de-page location as the legendary material from the life of Mary Magdalene which contains both mythical animals from folk belief as well as mundane ones.

Figure 4.1: two representations of the Green Man and a three representations of a griffon or wyvern from the cloisters of Norwich cathedral and the Queen Mary Psalter. A: roof boss CEM5. B: roof boss CEL5. C: roof boss CEE2. These carvings are set in the bays that are furthest from the cathedral on the eastern row. D and E: two images of the hunt for a griffon, from the Queen Mary Psalter (Royal MS 2 B VII, f 88v-89r)

The juxtaposition of the religious and secular folk beliefs in the cloisters and the Queen Mary Psalter engage the full semiotic network of the contemporary reader or viewer, creating meanings out of the combination of the familiar and the strange that are not readily apparent in a modern audience. Likewise, some of the confusion of modern readers when regarding the nonsense words spoken by the Clerk occurs because modern

readers cannot engage completely with the semiotic network in the way that contemporary viewers of the play would have. The meaning is still encoded, but we do not completely understand it. That lack of understanding reduces what would have been a sense of simultaneous familiarity and otherness during the service to only the comedic elements of the singsong nonsense words. To a contemporary audience, conversely, the otherness of the service would serve as a model of incorrect religious practices—practices that will be corrected by Mary Magdalene's preaching.

Throughout all this, and in comparison to his opening speech, the King and Queen appear sympathetic. Tonally, the King's prayer in response to the Clerk's service would not be out of place in the mouth of Mary Magdalene or one of the other religious figures, assuming the references to Mahound were changed to Christ:

> Mahownd, þou art of mytys most,
> In my syth a gloryus gost--
> Þou comfortyst me both in contre and cost,
> Wyth þi wesdom and þi wytt,
> For truly, lord, in þe is my trost.
> Good lord, lett natt my sowle be lost!
> All my cownsell well þou wotst,
> Here in þi presens as I sett.
> Thys besawnt of gold, rych and rownd,
> I ofer ytt for my lady and me,
> Þat þou mayst be ower covnfortys in þis stownd.
> Sweth Mahovnd, remembyr me![374]

[374] Ibid., 1210-1221.

The major difference here is the King's reference to the "besawnt of gold" he is offering, which references the World and leads nicely into the next speech by the Presbyter, where he attempts to sell false relics of Mahound to the King. These lines then signify both a reinforcement of the incorrectness of pagan religious practice and a critique of corruption within the church, but both within the context of different types of incorrect religious practice. Mary Magdalene's preaching will serve as a positive exemplar in comparison to "seynt mahovnd's" negative one. Mary gives of the light that Christ's touch has placed in her, while Mahound takes. They are mirrors of each other.

After the King and Queen return home from their religious service, we are treated to a reversal of the Messenger's action in the earlier portion of the play. He moves first from Pilate, to Herod, to the Emperor, carrying the message of Christ's death. Pilate is aware that Christ has "resyn […] as before he tawth," but follows the recommendations of his sergeants that the lie be spread that the disciples took him away. This happens, and so Herod and the Emperor are left believing that their desires at the beginning of the play have been fulfilled.

Much like the opening speech and travel of the messenger, this second bit of travel appears superfluous at first when it comes to telling Mary Magdalene's *vita.* As Jerome Bush notes, the earthly tyrants "believe that they control expanses of land beyond their respective *loca*," but "their only connection with that nebulous territory is through the nameless messengers."[375] Both Pilate and Herod seem to control Jerusalem, but it is Christ and Mary Magdalene who actually interact with others there. Mary

[375] Bush, 140.

Magdalene's memorial speech performed on the platea at lines 1336-1343, where she recounts the events of the Passion and resurrection within the area designated Jerusalem, indicates that the earthly tyrants who have been in charge of the city—Pilate and Herod—fail in their schemes to suppress the resurrection and ensure the temporal power of the Emperor of Rome. In this way, she presages the appearance of Christ at 1348. By remembering Christ's Passion and resurrection, she helps to forge the connection between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems for the audience, an action that reflects her position as an exemplar. It is not an accident then that immediately after this Heaven opens and Christ appears, enthroned in glory, and speaks to the audience.

This speech is the moment in the play where Mary Magdalene is given her mission to evangelize to Gaul. The language, though, does not reflect Mary Magdalene so much as the Virgin Mary. Christ first makes a series of allegorical connections regarding the Virgin:

> O, þe onclypsyd sonne, tempyll of Salamon!
> In þe mone I restyd, þat nevyr chonggyd goodnesse!
> In þe shep of Noee, fles of Judeon,
> She was my tapyrnakyll of grett nobylinesse,
> She was þe paleys of Phebus brygthnesse,
> She was þe wessell of puere clennesse,
> Wher my Godhed ȝaff my manhod myth;
> My blyssyd mother, of demvre femynyte,
> For mankynd, þe feynddys defens,
> Quewne of Jherusalem, þat heuenly cete,
> Empresse of hell, to make resystens.
> She is þe precyus pyn, full of ensens,
> The precyus synamvyr, þe body thorow to seche.
> She is þe mvske aȝens þe hertys of vyolens,
> Þe jentyll jelopher aȝens þe cardyakyllys wrech.
> The goodnesse of my mothere no tong can expresse,

Nere no clerke of hyre, hyre jovys can wryth.[376]

In this speech, he states the multiple significations of the Virgin Mary to the audience in the same way that Augustine suggested that the story of Daniel could have multiple significations as described in chapter one above. Moreover, as Coletti notes, "the Virgin Mary's own symbolic multivalence […] contributed to her congruence with the witness to Christ's resurrection, since the mother of Jesus herself occupied with notable fluidity roles that were also associated with Mary Magdalene: Bride, Mother, Church, and Christian soul."[377] Since Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary are occupying similar semiotic spaces—spaces associated with the Second Eve of which Haskins speaks—the Digby playwright is referencing ideas regarding the Virgin Mary in ways that directly reinforce her connection to Christ. Christ's words make that clear. However, when the words of the King of Devils earlier regarding Mary Magdalene's ability to destroy hell (itself contextualized in terms of the Virgin Mary, as I have mentioned above) are considered in this context, the intention is also to signify Mary Magdalene in connection with the Virgin Mary in a similar manner to Bokenham's association of the two. When Christ formally shifts to speaking of Mary Magdalene in the final six lines, it is to remember her "kendnesse" and to order Primus Angelus to descend and tell her to evangelize Marseilles.[378]

[376] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 1349-1365.
[377] Coletti, *Drama of Saints,* 171.
[378] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 1366.

Primus Angelus's speech to Mary Magdalene first commands her to "passe þe see" to Marseille and then to convert them, upon which point she will be admitted "as an holy apostylesse."[379] Since she appears on the place with her own disciple, Mary Magdalene is already being presented in this scene as an authority, but the biblical events traditionally associated with her position as an *apostelesse* have already passed. The genitive associating her with the apostles is missing, and so this phrase is finally revealing what Bokenham was building towards in his version of her *vita*: Mary Magdalene, recognized as an apostle in her own right and not subject to the authority of anyone else but Christ.

Mary Magdalene's authority is further reinforced by making the decision to leave Jerusalem and travel to Marseilles an actual decision on her part as the result of Christ's command, not the result of her expulsion by the Jews. After Primus Angelus has given her Christ's command, she first accedes to it and then immediately announces that "to þe see I wyll me hy, / Sum sheppyng to asspy." At this point, the Ship enters the performance space and Mary Magdalene negotiates with its master for passage to Marseilles, removing entirely the element of chance from her arrival at Marseilles.

The episode serves then as a way to visually represent the fourteen years Jacobus references between the Passion and the legendary events in Mary Magdalene's *vita*. It does so first by tying up the loose ends regarding Christ—having the earthly tyrants attempt to suppress the truth of Christ's resurrection only to be immediately shown up by Christ enthroned in glory. It also sets in motion the legendary portion of the

[379] Ibid., 1377, 1380.

play through Primus Angelus's command to Mary Magdalene to evangelize. It presents her as an *apostelesse*, connected to the Virgin Mary, and suggests that the sinner seen in the biblical portion of the play has been transformed into a figure that can do no wrong and who serves as *the* earthly authority during the legendary portion of the play.

Ninth Episode: The Legendary Material

Much as in Bokenham, the legendary material remains fairly consistent with the presentation in Jacobus, with minor differences. The greatest difference, however, is that with the exception of the journey of the King and Queen to Jerusalem on pilgrimage the same interplay between locations that we see in the other portions of the play is not present. Since episodes partially divide along geographic lines, this absence helps to keep the legendary material relatively unchanged. Because it does not change much, I will not concentrate not so much on how the legendary material in the play differs from the representation in Bokenham and Jacobus. Instead, I want to discuss how Mary Magdalene is presented in this material, what that says about her as an *apostelesse*, and what that representation indicates about fifteenth century ways of thinking regarding the saint.

Traditionally, at this point in Mary Magdalene's *vita* the disciples take shelter under the stairs of the local temple in Marseilles, where she preaches to the assembled people and meets the governor and his wife when they come to sacrifice. However, the King of Marseilles has already sacrificed in the last episode, so to have this occur would be a redundancy. Moreover, due to the nature of her commission to evangelize and her choice to seek passage to Marseilles, Mary Magdalene is not a castaway but an arrival

who has travelled to a place she intended, reflecting her agency as an apostolic figure. In the spirit of that agency, she first reaffirms her own credentials by praying "Lord, gravnt me vyctore aȝens þe fyndys flame." Her words here remind the audience of the particular efficacy of Mary Magdalene against the devil, built up by Bokenham's signification of her efficacy as an exemplar and which we saw referenced by the King of the World's warning that she has the power to destroy hell. She follows this up by stating that she intends to visit the King—itself a change from the way events are presented in Jacobus and Bokenham. There, she does not enter the palace until after the King has accepted her authority as a religious figure, and her initial preaching is done in the outdoors. Here, due to the authority granted to her by Christ, she enters the palace and speaks to the king without deference, immediately stating that he needs to provide her with a place to live in Christ's name:

> Now, þe hye Kyng Crist, mannys redempcyon,
> Mote save yow, syr kyng, regnyng in equite,
> And mote gydde yow þe [way] toward sauasyon.
> Jhesu, þe Son of þe mythty Trenite,
> That was, and is, and evyr xall be,
> For mannys sowle þe reformacyon,
> In hys name, lord, I beseche þe,
> Wythin þi lond to have my mancyon.[380]

Unsurprisingly, the King does not accept this, defying her and threatening to "fell [her] flatt," before asking who made her "so hardy to make swych rebon."[381] This serves as an

[380] Ibid., 1454-1461.

opening to Mary Magdalene to begin to preach, as she responds to his threat first by reassuring him that she "cam not […] for no decepcyon" and then to affirm his need to accept Christ.[382] The King responds by repeating his demand to know who Christ is, and in response to his questions Mary Magdalene signifies Christ for the King and through that, for the audience.

First, she states that Christ "est Salvator, yf thow wyll lere," the second person and son in the trinity, and the conqueror of hell.[383] The King, unconvinced, demands to know "of whatt powyr is þat God" and Mary Magdalene responds to he "mad hevyn and erth, lond and see" out of "nowthe." This explanation too is not enough for the King, who then demands that she explain the process by which Christ made the world. Here, Mary Magdalene lays out the specific ways in which Christ did so in a way that fits the scriptural depiction of the seven days and which also echoes the structure of the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*.[384] While I do not think this means that the playwright was working with the *Mirror* as well as the *Legenda Aurea,* it does remind the audience of the larger religious contexts in which the days of the week occur. Likewise, the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral provide a graphical representation that hits on the same notes as the playtext, but does not adhere entirely to the scriptural order:

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[381] Ibid., 1464-1465.
[382] Ibid., 1466-1469.
[383] Ibid., 1471-1473.
[384] This is also the point in the play where the phrase "Jh*es*u m*er*cy," as mentioned last chapter, appears in the bottom margin of 129r.

Figure 4.2: the events of Genesis, from Bay NA of Norwich Cathedral. Note that while all the expected elements are there—the creation of the firmament, the separation of waters, the beasts, and finally Adam and Eve, the order is not consistent and the fall, unsurprisingly, is given the pride of place at the center.

The events of the creation of the world are present, but they are out of order and interspersed with the fall of man. The sun is at the bottom of the picture with the creation of the firmament and the earth flanking it on either side. The next event—the creation of the animals—occurs on the next boss up, but the creation of the fish and birds occurs up towards the top, in the two bosses flanking the swan. The fall of the rebel angels is interposed in the narrative by one angel in motley—a color repeated on devils throughout—and another angel clothed in white. Finally, the central image is not the creation of man, but rather his temptation and fall, with Adam and Eve sampling apples given to them by Lucifer.

What the sequence in the roof bosses suggests, especially when the events of the Digby play are considered, is that linear narrative structure as we think of it is not necessarily as important as the fact that all of the elements are there. Connection, rather than position, is the most important part of the network and denotes the importance of an element. It is enough in terms of the play that the King has performed a sacrifice, as that is his expected role in Mary Magdalene's *vita*. However, the sacrifice he makes is not particularly important and thus can be easily moved for the purposes of stretching the time necessary for some bit of stage business to occur elsewhere. Conversely, Mary Magdalene's preaching to the King is important and must be where it is in order for the narrative to move forward. Therefore, she has to immediately enter and preach to him even though the sacrifice has already occurred.

While her preaching at this point fulfills the expectation created by Jacobus' version of her *vita,* it also provides a visual opportunity for the audience to see Christ's

power. Where the *Legenda* states "cui Magdalena Christum predicans sacrificia dissuasit"[385] ["Magdalene preached Christ to [the king and queen], and dissuaded them from sacrifice"] both Bokenham and the play suggest that the ruler of Marseilles is not willing to simply accept Mary Magdalene's persuasion. Bokenham notes that "at þat tyme, þe soth to seyn, / Maryis wurdys auaylyd no thyng"[386] as the Prince and his wife left her unconvinced of the truth of her words. The play goes even further, creating a scene where the King of Marseilles first threatens her, then reacts.

Rather than explain his god to her, the King demands that the assemblage go to the Heathen temple, where he first shows her the idol and then beseeches it to speak, bowing before it. When it does not, he demands of the priest to know why, and the priest informs him that the idol "woll natt speke whyle Chriseten here is." Christ's power is stressed here both to the King of Marseilles and to the audience: it is not Mary Magdalene as a particularly powerful Christian, but the fact that a Christian—with its implication that a Christian can mean any Christian, including those in the audience—is present. The audience, should they follow the path that Mary Magdalene has laid out, will have this same level of power against the sins the idol represents.

To reaffirm the power of faith that she represents, Mary Magdalene requests that the King allow her to pray to Christ in order to show him a miracle. Upon receiving his grudging consent she does so, stating "Dominur, illuminacio mea, quem timebo? /

[385] Jacobus, 41.
[386] Bokenham, 5808-5809.

Dominus, protecctor vite mee, a quo trepedabo?"[387] ["Lord, the light of me, who shall I fear? The Lord, protector of my life, from whom [shall I] be afraid?"] Unsurprisingly considering the visual nature of performance, at this point the idol begins to "tremyll and quake,"[388] indicating Christ's power is greater than that of Mahound. More important, however, is that Mary Magdalene acknowledges that power by recalling the light of Christ within her specifically by using the phrase "illuminacio mea," which echos not only the multiple significations that Jacobus provided for her name, but also the way in which Christ saved her from sin in the scriptural portion of the play. Additionally, it is that light, placed within in her by Christ, which provides the justification to preach in the scriptural episode. Finally, the playwright underscores the connection between the Latin and the response on stage by having her invoke Christ in the form of a loose prayer:

> Now, Lord of lordys, to þi blyssyd name sanctificatt,
> Most mekely my feyth I recummend.
> Pott don þe pryd of mamentys violatt!
> Lord, to þi lovyr þi goodnesse descend!
> Lett natt þer pryd to þi poste pretend,
> Wheras is rehersyd þi hye name Jhesus!
> Good Lord, my preor I feythfully send!
> Lord, þi rythwysnesse here dyscus![389]

[387] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 1552-1553, 1553 s.d.
[388] Ibid., 1553 s.d.
[389] Ibid., 1554-1561.

In response to this prayer, a cloud comes from Heaven and the temple is set on fire, with the Presbyter and Clerk sinking—itself indicative of the descent into hell in the allegorical portion of the play.

The events at the heathen temple would have been visually impressive to an audience, but in terms of the narrative of Mary Magdalene's *vita* as recounted by Jacobus, they do very little. The reason why the King considers conversion in Jacobus is because Mary Magdalene visits his wife three times, complaining that she and her husband allow the disciples of Christ to starve. It is only on the third time, when she appears before the King as well, that they consider her words and state that they will convert should the wife conceive. Here, however, the King promises to consider conversion in response to the miracle at the Heathen Temple, and then inexplicably drives Mary Magdalene away when she asks him to believe in Christ "and in no mo."[390] The narrative then returns to the events as Jacobus recounts them: Mary Magdalene goes to the King's bed, accompanied by angels, and complains that he allows her to starve. This only happens once to both the King and Queen, rather than the three times in Jacobus and Bokenham.

I believe the reason for the disjointed account of these events lies in the desire to present Mary Magdalene as a miracle worker in her apostolic life, in a way that would resonate visually with the medieval playgoing audience. Having the idols tremble and the heathen temple destroyed is much more impressive than a woman who is starving and appears before the King bathed in white light. However, that event cannot simply be

[390] Ibid., 1572.

ignored—it not only is in all the versions of the *vita* in Jacobus, Bokenham, and the *South English Legendary*, but the light that "ower chambyr sholld a brentt,"[391] according to the Queen, is the same light that the play has repeatedly noted Christ placed into Mary Magdalene and which destroyed the Heathen Temple. If the purpose of the play is to reaffirm or more firmly establish for the audience Mary Magdalene's status as an *apostelesse* without the limitations of "of the apostles," then the scene chastising the King is necessary to prevent her signification from coming into question. However, it is not necessary that all three visitations occur, so the playwright removes two for the more visually impressive destruction of the temple and ties the two together through the light that has been signified to be Christ's presence within her.

Once the King's soldier brings Mary Magdalene before him and she asks what their will is, the King explains that his intent is to feed and clothe her. More important in terms of the construction of the saint, however, is the fact that the King asks her to "reherse here presentt / The joyys of yower Lord in heven," which she does in the form of a sermon to the audience as well as the King and Queen:

> A, blyssyd þe ower, and blyssyd be þe tyme,
> Þat to Goddys lawys ȝe wyll gyff credens!
> To yowerselfe ȝe make a glad pryme
> Aȝens þe fenddys malycyows violens!
> From God above comit þe influens
> Be þe Holy Gost into þi brest sentt down,
> For to restore þi offens,
> Þi sowle to bryng to ewyrlastyng salvacyon.[392]

[391] Ibid., 1628.
[392] Ibid., 1658-1665.

At the conclusion to this sermon, she states that the Queen is pregnant. The result of acting in a Christian manner and listening to her is the fulfillment of the King's desire as stated at the destruction of the Heathen Temple.

Also important here is Mary Magdalene's self construction. When asked by the King who she is, she states that she is "Mary Mavdleyn, wythowtyn blame," to which the King responds by calling her "blyssyd Mary." This recalls the Virgin, with whom Mary Magdalene has been conflated throughout the play, for the viewing audience. Since Mary Magdalene has been serving as an authoritative figure that is without blame ever since the events at Simon the Leper's house, the conflation between her and the Virgin Mary only further serves to reinforce the correctness and propriety of her actions, including preaching, throughout the play. While it is possible to be upset at the notion of a woman preaching, it is harder to do so when first, the figure is connected with the Virgin, and second, when her preaching has been approved by Christ. Having Mary Magdalene model her preaching off of Christ helps to protect the concept of her as preacher from being rejected, as to reject that concept is to reject the preaching of Christ as her model and the specific statement that she is to be considered an *apostelesse*. Moreover, in sending the King of Marseilles to see Peter—an event that occurs in the other versions of the *vita*—Mary Magdalene also states that "he halp me pray, / And he xall crestyn yow from þe fynddys powyr." Despite the fact we have not seen Peter since the biblical portion of the play, her invocation of him here—and through him, of the

Church—serves to suggest that she is not acting outside of the bounds of the Church, but instead with both heavenly and earthly approval.

The events of the King and Queen's pilgrimage to Jerusalem are truncated slightly. He does not go to Rome, but instead goes directly to Jerusalem. Along the way the Queen takes ill and dies, and the way her death occurs strengthens the connection between Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary and serves to reinforce that this Mary Magdalene, much like that of Bokenham, is an authority that can do no wrong. First, the Queen's death speech refers to "Mary, Mary flowyr of wommaned" and requests that she "forȝete me nowth."[393] This Mary could refer to either Mary Magdalene or the Virgin Mary, and it is not until the rest of the exchange between the King and Queen, where the King requests that she "trost in Mary Mavdleyn" and the Queen asks that "Mary Mavdleyn, my sowle lede" that it becomes evident that they're speaking here of Mary Magdalene rather than the Virgin.[394] The playwright, as he has done throughout, allows ambiguity regarding the name "Mary" before purposely punctualizing it in order to make the audience realize he is speaking of Mary Magdalene. That moment of uncertainty, however, means that the audience blends the two before settling on Mary Magdalene, and so the point at which the chain of signs originates from is not the same as it might have been otherwise. This occurs again when the King refers to "Blyssyd Mavdleyn," rather than to Mary, before referring to her later as "Mary myld" in the same set of lines. There, the playwright wants the audience to think of Mary Magdalene, rather

[393] Ibid., 1747-1748.
[394] Ibid., 1751, 1745.

than the Virgin Mary, when making reference to "Mary myld," and constructs the lines accordingly.

Mary Magdalene is presented through this interplay of significations as somebody who can do no wrong, reinforced narratively through the total absence of any recrimination of Mary Magdalene by the King for the death of his wife. In the last chapter, I showed how Bokenham lessened the recrimination of Mary Magdalene in the service of his construction of the saint as an exemplar. Here, that recrimination is entirely absent. Instead, the King laments the death of his wife and the death of his child for lack of sustenance, as he does in Bokenham. Rather than commending the wife and Child to Mary Magdalene's guidance with the implication that it is her fault, however, the King only asks that "Blessyd Mavdlyn be hyr rede" and says that he will "pray to Mary myld / To be þer gyde here."[395] Where in Bokenham and Jacobus it is a moment of doubt for the King that will be alleviated by Peter, here his faith is unwavering. Mary Magdalene cannot be seen to do any wrong at this point in the play; in her own words, she is without blame, and the playwright does not wish the audience to question this.

Instead, when the King meets with Peter, his wife is not even mentioned. The King lets Peter know that he is there at the behest of Mary Magdalene, and that she is a "woman I thynk [is without] gyle."[396] Moreover, the teaching that Peter provides him is stated to specifically help him "forsake þe fynd Saternas," and the baptism is requested

[395] Ibid., 1792, 1795-1796.
[396] Ibid., 1823.

in order to save the King "from þe fyndys bond,"[397] something that Mary Magdalene is especially good at as evidenced by the events of the play and the words of the King of the World. Since the queen's death is problematic when dealing with a saint who is supposed to be without sin or blame, any possibility of blame has been removed. Moreover, although Peter is necessary to authorize Mary Magdalene's preaching and religious activities in a similar way that the institution of the Church served to authorize Love and Julian, though not Kempe, the playwright does not want to have the focus of religious instruction come from Peter. Peter does not give the same sort of sermons that Mary Magalene gives; instead, he states

> Syr, dayly ȝe xall lobor more and more,
> Tyll þat ȝe have very experyens.
> Wyth me xall ȝe wall to have more eloquens,
> And goo vesyte þe stacyons, by and by;
> To Nazareth and Bedlem, goo wyth delygens,
> And be yower own inspeccyon, yower feyth to edyfy.[398]

Rather than being an instructor, Peter serves as a guide for the King's own inspection of the sites of the events of the Passion—sites that were defined in the performance space by Mary Magdalene in the scriptural portion of the play. Peter is limited to serving as the representation of those elements of the church, such as baptism, that Mary Magdalene cannot perform due to her gender and which the audience cannot accept her doing

[397] Ibid., 1829, 1838.
[398] Ibid., 1845-1850.

without the network that their faith represents being punctualized, examined, and most dangerously, questioned.

The playwright reinforces this desire in the scene where the Queen is miraculously brought back to life. While the events themselves do not differ much from that in Jacobus, and the playwright also shares Bokenham's placing of Mary Magdalene at the forefront of the Queen's religious experience, he does not have the King directly beseech Mary Magdalene by name, as he does in Jacobus and Bokenham. Rather, he refers to her as "þat puer vergyn"—again conflating her and the Virgin Mary—before his wife awakens, speaking four lines of praise to Mary Magdalene in the same manner that the praise of Christ occurs earlier in the play. The first three lines are left ambiguous, referring to her as "virgo salutata," "pulcra et casa," and "almyty Maydyn" before finally collapsing the signification with the reference to her as "demvr Mavdlyn." She also stresses that while Peter performed her baptism, it is through "Maryvs gyddavns" that this occurred, and that she served as her guide in the same way that Peter did for the King, showing her the Cross and Sepulchure.[399]

The episode closes with the King and Queen's return to Marseilles to find Mary Magdalene preaching to the people there, and presumably to the audience. She returns the governorship of Marseilles to them and announces her intention to go into the wilderness. Mary's final act as an apostlesse in the play, rather than as a hermitess, is to bless the King and Queen with long life and long reign.

[399] Ibid., 1895, 1899-1902, 1905.

Tenth Episode: The Hermitage

Narratively, the hermitage episode is similar in broad strokes to that depicted in Jacobus and Bokenham. Mary Magdalene goes off into the wilderness for thirty years, where she is fed with manna. She is seen by a priest and, upon his questioning, she informs him of who she is and that she is ready to die.

However, in the play Mary Magdalene is not referred to as the Magdalene at all during this episode. Instead, she is referred to as Mary throughout. Considering the ways in which the playwright has used the multiple significations of the word Mary to create an equivalency between Mary Magdalene and the Virgin, I do not believe that this can be unintentional. Moreover, Mary's opening speech upon entering her hermitage states not only that she will live in charity—the virtue that she first admonishes the King and Queen of Marseilles for not showing—but also that she will do so "at þe reverens of Ower Blyssyd Lady" for the edification of her soul.[400] The playwright alludes to the earlier speech by Christ that began the legendary material here by having Mary Magdalene invoke the Virgin Mary and then by having Christ respond to invocation by sending the angels to feed her with manna.

Upon arriving, the Second Angel states that she has been "Inhansyd in heven above wergynnys"—which echoes the special status of Mary Magdalene in the belief of Margery Kempe—and she is taken bodily up into the clouds to receive manna. A priest sees this, and rather than ask who she is or acting in fear of her as occurs in Bokenham and Jacobus, he immediately knows that she is Mary, that she is of "gret perfy[t]nesse,"

[400] Ibid., 1997-1999.

and asks that she "she[w] me of yower Lord." The priest is a representative of the institutional Church—he demonstrates that when he states that he is "sacryed a pryst / Mynystryyd be angelys at my masse"—but at this point he is considering himself subordinate to Mary Magdalene. The assumption into heaven represented on stage, the constant repetition of her as Mary, and the Angel's direct praise of her all serve to allow the playwright to make this move and suggest that the eremetic contemplative life she is living is not only superior to the active life, but superior to that of the institutional Church.

The role of the priest, representing the Church, in relation to Mary Magdalene as saint is the most significant difference in this episode, and is reinforced further through the absence of Saint Maximin. As Coletti notes, where "Jacobus's contemplative Magdalene requests that the hermit priest inform Maximin of her imminent passing […] the Digby play conflates the duties of the hermit priest with those usually assigned to Maximin and makes Mary's desert interlocutor the bearer of her final communion."[401] This means that a nameless priest, himself living as a hermit in presumed contemplation, is representing institutional authority rather than the Bishop of Aix. He does so through truncated version of events in Jacobus and Bokenham. In both of those versions of the Magdalene *vita,* Mary leaves the wilderness and goes to the cathedral of Aix to receive her last rites from Maximin. This reinforces the importance of the institutional nature of Christian belief and brings what could be a problematic figure into accord with the accepted realities of fifteenth century spirituality. The play does not do this.

[401] Coletti, *Drama of Saints,* 132.

Throughout, Mary Magdalene has been conflated with figures whose authority are beyond that of the institutional church: the Virgin Mary and Christ himself. The playwright uses the network of significations surrounding Christ to justify Mary Magdalene as a preacher outside of the established order of the church, and then the network of significations surrounding the Virgin Mary to reinforce that justification when Christ can no longer directly serve as a means to deflect criticism. In this final portion of the play, it is not the institutional Church that is necessary for Mary Magdalene's last rites. As Caroline Walker Bynum has noted in her discussions of the gendered Christ and the late Middle Ages, people at the time of the play's production "saw a certain rupture with ordinary worldly life as a mark of religious commitment." Moreover, she states that "human nature, fallen in Adam, is taken on, *married,* and redeemed by Christ the bridgegroom in [the Virgin] Mary's body."[402] By conflating Mary Magdalene with the Virgin, as we have seen throughout, and by presenting her *vita* in such a way that the institutional Church is, if not entirely removed, lessened in importance she shows a path to the audience not only of religious commitment, but the possibility of becoming the bride of Christ without the necessity of the involvement of the Church. Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* is showing a path towards a direct connection with Christ that exists outside the church, a connection that both Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich sketched out at the beginning of the century.

This is obviously a dangerous statement to make, and the attempts at using the Virgin Mary and Christ throughout the play have been precisely to allow the sentiment

[402] Bynum, 280, 268.

to exist without being examined too closely. The playwright has carefully constructed Mary Magdalene, building in many ways on the construction of Bokenham, in order to shield this conception of the saint from criticism. The priest must give Mary Magdalene the host at her last rites—it is the final point of contact with the institutional church necessary to keep the network surrounding the saint in the play intact without causing the audience to question her construction too closely. That it is an unnamed priest, who already sees himself in a subordinate position to Mary Magdalene, only reinforces further her role outside of the institutional church and the possibilities she presents to the audience.

In his final speech, the priest praises her, stating

> O good God, grett is þi grace!
> O Jhesu, Jhesu! Blessyd be þi name!
> A, Mary, Mary! Mych is þi solas,
> In heven blysse wyth gle and game![403]

Not only is this a final conflation of the Virgin Mary and Christ, but it also serves as the opening of a statement intended to bring the events of the play to a close and the audience back to reality. The Priest states that he will bury Mary "wyth alle reverens and solemntye," and then hopes that

> Allemythty God, most of magnyfycens,
> Mote bryng yow to hys blysse so brygth,

[403] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 2124-2127.

In presens of þat Kyng.[404]

Here, the representative of the Church expresses his hope that the audience will find salvation through the same means as Mary Magdalene, but the practical means are left unspoken. The audience has just seen how to achieve salvation, and it is through following Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse.*

[404] Ibid., 2130, 2133-2135.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: REJECTING THE *APOSTELESSE*

Mary Magdalene's significations were able to shift and expand through the course of the fifteenth century because religion at that point relied on authorities, but did not rely on texts. Bokenham and Love both demonstrate that the importance placed not only on scripture, but on the understandings of scripture as interpreted by Church fathers and respected theologians allowed an author to choose what elements to emphasize in presenting a version of the Magdalene that would resonate most closely with their audience and its understanding of salvation history. Furthermore, the notion of salvation history flattened linear time. The events of the events of the scriptural past, current present, and scriptural future are all presented in a sort of timeless present, as can be seen in Margery Kempe's description of her visions and the way that the Digby playwright deals with events as depicted in the play. Important events had to occur in some sort of sequence, but ancillary events merely needed to happen in order to fulfill the expectations of readers and viewers.

The word *apostelesse,* introduced in a text intended to counter Lollardy through shaded analysis, came to be associated with the legendary life of the saint and through that to an alternate piety that was at once divorced from an integral to the religious orders. The Magdalene was still a saint, however, and that most integral of significations would affect how she was perceived in a sixteenth-century environment that was less welcoming to the idea of saints. The Reformation and the Catholic reaction to it both

relied on *sola scriptura* as a means to justify competing versions of the one true Church. The functions of the conceptual scripture were more closely bound to the text due to that reliance, and that altered the significance of Mary Magdalene.

The effects of the Reformation on the Magdalene's signification are apparent when the Digby *Mary Magdalene* is compared to a Lewis Wager's mid sixteenth-century *Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene*. In the last chapter, I noted that the Digby play required around sixty characters to perform, and thirty-seven named locations. In comparison, the 1567 edition of Wager's play advertised itself as being performable by four players and is likely limited to a single stage.[405] While this represents, in part, the difference between a hall play and a place-and-scaffold production, the fact that this play was entered into the stationer's register and printed, when the Mary Magdalene play was not, already suggests that the civil authorities in London, if not yet in the countryside, have shifted away from large-scale depictions of Mary Magdalene's life.

Furthermore, while Wager's play has allegorical figures, the allegorical figures are not representations of the Seven Deadly Sins, the angels, and the allegorical tyrants that we see in the Digby play and referenced in other allegorical works. Instead, the malicious allegorical figures represented are Infidelity, Cupidity, Malicious Judgement, and Carnal Concupiscence. Beneficial allegorical figures are The Lawe, Knowledge of Sinne, Fayth, Repentaunce, Justification, and Love. While none of these figures would

[405] Wager, *The life and repentaunce of Marie Magdalene.* As Carpenter notesin the introduction (xvii), while the play advertises itself as being performable by four, it actually requires five players.

be out of place functionally in a medieval allegorical play, they suggest a conceptual shift away from the names (and the unintended significations the audience would carry with them into the theater) of the traditional virtues and vices and the hierarchy that placed the latter under the command of either the World, the Flesh, or the Devil. Instead, they harken back to the civic virtues and vices present as Elizabeth I's coronation procession: Pure religion, Love of subjectes, Wisedome, and Justice, who warred there with Superstition and Ignoraunce, Rebellion and Insolencie, jollie and vaine glorie, and Adulacion and Briberie, respectively.[406] Furthermore, the only non-allegorical characters to appear in Wager's play are Christ, Mary Magdalene, and Simon, here stressed as a Pharisee rather than as a leper. Mary Magdalene has already fallen, and other than a reference to Magdalene castle and to her parents in the prologue, the events of the extra-biblical *Legenda* do not appear.

That Wager, despite obvious knowledge of the extra-biblical events of the *Legenda,* limits himself only to the events of scripture is telling. The play, like Bokenham, justifies itself by citing Mark and Luke, but it does so in a prologue that references classical authors Valerius and Horacebefore making direct reference to how virtue and vice should function in the England of Elizabeth I:[407]

> Doth not our facultie learnedly extoll vertue?
> Doth it not teache, God to be praised aboue al thing ?
> What facultie doth vice more earnestly subdue?
> Doth it not teache true obedience to the kyug ?

[406] Kinney, 224.
[407] Wager, 9, 15.

> What godly sentences to the mynde doth it bryng!
> I saie, there was neuer thyng inuented,
> More worth for man's solace to be frequented.[408]

Religion, then, is to be placed entirely in the service of the state, and the signification of Mary Magdalene in this text is based not on the teachings of church fathers, but on what "the Apostles of Christ do largely write" and "Authoritie of Scripture."

The reliance on the authority of scripture and the words of the apostles was not absent from her signification in the fifteenth century. As I have shown in chapter two, Bokenham was able to carefully deploy scriptural and lay authorities to explain Mary Magdalene as an exemplar. Furthermore, it allowed him to align the saint, who was already conflated with the Virgin through the Second Eve formulation, in a way that naturally aligned with the interests of the aristocracy and those who wished to follow some form of contemplation even if they did not take orders. Mary Magdalene's eventual resignification as *apostelsse*, divorced from the limitations of the "of the apostles" portion of the traditional phrase, allowed her to be presented as a true apostle, with her own evangelical mission and with her own voice—which she used to preach.

This resignification of Mary Magdalene can be seen as a preference for the conceptual scripture over the actual words of the Bible, as interpreted by the institutional church. However, the sixteenth-century reliance on *sola scriptura* reduced the role of the conceptual scripture within the minds of the laity and strengthened the role of the institutional church. Instead of resignification and interpretation, people are to rely on

[408] Ibid., 31-37.

the text of the Bible itself. Wager underscores that in the *Marie Magdalene* by not merely citing Luke, as Bokenham did, but citing Luke 7 specifically. He fully expects the audience to go back to the scripture and use it to understand the play, rather than simply rely on the authority of the fact that these events occur in scripture. He is citing his sources in a way that neither Bokenham, Jacobus, Love, nor Johannis did.

Mary Magdalene's signification as *apostelesse*, which rests upon her evangelistic mission to Marseilles, is undermined by insisting on reference to scripture in the play. Wager acknowledges the *Legenda*, but does not use it, which is itself akin to how Bokenham positioned scriptural accounts to build Mary Magdalene up a hundred years prior. The signification of Mary Magdalene as repentant sinner is already well known, so it does not need to be justified or explicated. It can rely on the various significations of the saint already extant. By de-emphasizing the extra-biblical element of Mary Magdalene, though, Wager manages to leave her solely as an example of repentance and eliminates any further acknowledgement of her as an exemplary figure due to her preaching. As the character Love states at the close of the play "By the word came faith; Faith brought penitence; / But bothe the gyft of God's magnificence. /Thus by Faith onely Marie was iustified."[409] Mary Magdalene has no hand in her repentance beyond having faith in Christ. She cannot be saved by her evangelical activities, nor is she any more than just another sinner in the eyes of Christ. Moreover, Wager erases Mary Magdalene's position as a contemplative, choosing not to include the parts of her life that mark her most strongly as a contemplative in the extra-biblical material. He does not

[409] Ibid., 2043-2045.

include Martha as part of the legend, he does not acknowledge that she had a choice to pick the better part, and he does not include the hermitage in the wilderness.

While the difference in the sixty to eighty years between the Digby play and Wager's *Life and Repentaunce* did not represent a complete sea change in English piety—the Digby play was likely performed at Chelmsford close to this time and the *Life and Repentaunce* was produced, performed, and entered into the stationer's register only a little more than twenty years removed from the death of Henry VIII—the center of gravity had shifted. The connection Mary Magdalene had with the House of York (and particularly with its women), as shown by Bokenham's "Prolocutory," Cicely Neville's will, and the frontispiece of *Le dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ* had protected the carefully deployed scriptural and lay authorities that Bokenham used to explain her signification, but in rejecting Rome Henry VIII not only had altered the conceptual scripture, but had removed the vestiges of the House of York's protection of the resignfied saint.

The Bible would, by Wager's time, serve as a restraint on the conceptual scripture, and the saints, including Mary Magdalene, had less and less of a role in English religious practice. Instead, the English would come to resignify Elizabeth herself, as seen in John Aylmer's *An Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subiectes* (1559). There, Aylmer uses the same mix of scriptural and classical reference that Wager uses—conveniently glossed in the margins—to have an allegorical representation of the nation state that "

> out of my wombe should come that seruant of his your brother Joh*n* VVycliffe, who begat Husse, who begat Luther, who begat truth. VVhat greter honor could you or I have, than it pleased Christ as it were in a second birth to be borne again of me among you?[410]

This allegorical representation of, as Helen Hackett describes her, "Mother England" becomes conflated with Elizabeth soon after, with England reminding "trew harted Englishe men" that their "dutie to God […] commaundeth [them] to obey [Elizabeth] for that care and love whiche she beareth toward [them]."[411] Here then Aylmer is laying the seeds for Elizabeth as Second Eve, suggesting that the return of Christ will be in England and that Elizabeth, as the bodily representation of the allegorical Mother England, will have a role similar to that of the Virgin Mary. Likewise, in justifying Elizabeth's role as head of the English Church, Aylmer speaks first of "the women, the fyrst Apostles and messengers of the resurrection," a reference to the three Marys as *apostolae* in much the same mode as Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century. He then goes on to mention that in the "Ecclesiastical Historie, A certen woman" was the Apostle to the Iberians. While this is Saint Nina rather than Mary Magdalene, the way that Aylmer describes her first turning "the Kynge and Quene, and then the whole countrey to the fayth of Christe" certainly fits the description of Mary Magdalene in her *vita* as well.[412]

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[410] Alymer, sig. R1v.
[411] Hackett, 51-52. See also King and Yates.
[412] Aylmer, sig. H1v.

Aylmer's use of the significations of the Virgin Mary in his presentation of the allegorical England, the careful way that he mentions both the *apostola apostolorum* and Saint Nina but does not name either, his use of scriptural reference to make his case, and the way in which the allegorical England conflates duty to the state with duty to God all play off of models of resignification that were in play with the development of Mary Magdalene as exemplar a century prior. The careful avoidance of reference to saints in Aylmer's words and the choice to use Nina rather than Mary Magdalene as his example of female preaching, however, show how much ground the idea of the Magdalene as *apostelesse* had lost. Finally, the conflation of Elizabeth with the allegorical England began the process of associating Elizabeth with the Second Eve in much the same way as resignifications of Mary Magdalene had a century prior, conflating her and the Virgin Mary and leaving the other Mary, the penitent sinner who became a path to purity, out in the cold.

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APPENDIX

CHARACTERS AND LOCATIONS IN THE DIGBY *MARY MAGDALENE*

The Digby play represents a point of view that could be considered heterodox: Mary Magdalene is called an *apostelesse* divorced from any limitations on her apostolic authority. She is represented as a figure second only to the Virgin Mary, and at times perhaps even exceeding her depending on the level of conflation occurring. She openly preaches, and only accepts the institutional authority of the Church in the most limited of ways and even there only when it is necessary for the play to do so. Because of this, determining what would be necessary for the play to be performed both in terms of characters and in terms of location would be useful in examining how likely the play was to be performed and what, perhaps, a performance might have done to reinforce Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse.*

With sixty characters and forty named locations, one might argue that the play is simply too large and unwieldy. Yet there are two examples from the manuscript itself that suggest that some version of the play was performed: the rubricated text at the end of the work, before the colophon, stating that it is the "oreginale de Sancta Maria Magdalena"[413] and the inclusion of stage directions that serve two differing functions within the work. The first set of stage directions, which occur at 305 s.d., 440 s.d., and 2020 s.d. (but with hints of a similar structure throughout the rest of the play), sum up the upcoming events in the play, indicate a shift between the real and allegorical worlds,

[413] Baker, Murphy, and Hall, 2139 s.d. Although the text itself is not a stage direction, the editorial apparatus of the EETS edition treats it as such.

and show that we are about to switch episodes within the work.[414] The second set of stage directions are more conventional markers of action that we might expect as the text proceeds.

Because these elements indicate that the play is intended as a performance text, the play itself is possibly a major node that reflects thinking in regards to the saint in the late fifteenth century. The resources necessary to put on a place-and-scaffold work with the quantity of characters and locations indicated suggests that a performance of the Digby *Mary Magdalene* would have been a major undertaking on par with the performance of a pageant cycle by either a single city or a communal work amongst several villages in Norfolk. The resources necessary to perform the play, and the fact that the playtext is intended for performance rather than personal contemplation suggests that the play could be performed despite the possibly heterodox nature of its ideas and that the idea of Mary Magdalene as *apostelesse* was accepted at the time of the play's writing and performance.

The play has sixty single or composite characters named, some of whom go by multiple names in the stage directions. The figure below is the complete list of these characters:

[414] Jones, 1-38, 186-192. Jones gives a convincing argument that the play should be considered in episodes, rather than scenes.

Character Name	Line Introduced[415]	First Speaks	Total Lines	Percentage of all lines
Emperor[416]	1	1	79	3.6916
Scribe	1	20	2	0.0935
Provost	1	30	19	0.8879
Messenger[417]	1	137	46	2.1495
People[418]	44	45	2	0.0935
Cyrus	49	50	52	2.4299
Lazarus	49	86	49	2.2897
Mary Magdalene	49	94	459	21.4486
Martha	49	102	56	2.6168
Herod	140	141	61	2.8505
Philosopher	140	168	10	0.4673
Second Philosopher	140	179	8	0.3738
First Soldier	140	194	18	0.8411
Second Soldier	140	828	2	0.0935
Pilate	229	230	41	1.9159
First Sargeant	229	245	6	0.2804
Second Sargeant	229	247	6	0.2804
World[419]	305	306	42	1.9626
Pride[420]	305	327	38	1.7757
Covetousness	305	329	2	0.0935
Good Angel[421]	305	588	31	1.4486
Sloth[422]	334	N/A	N/A	0
Gluttony[423]	334	N/A	N/A	0
Flesh	334	335	29	1.3551
Lechery[424]	334	353	25	1.1682

[415] In the cases where there is only a single line difference, it should be understood that the character is being introduced in a stage direction. For example, Cyrus is introduced at 49 s.d. but speaks at 50.
[416] Although the playtext uses "Inperator," he refers to himself as "Tyberyus" at line 8.
[417] The first mention of him refers to him as "Nvncyus." He is referred to as "Masengyr" otherwise.
[418] If the "People" referenced include the audience, then they are obviously present in the Place since the beginning of the play.
[419] The King of the World is referred to in the stage directions as "Mundus," but the EETS edition refers to him as "World" in their stage directions, based on his announcement to the audience. I have followed them.
[420] Pride is also referred to as "Galavnt" and variations of "Coryoste" when he is wooing Mary Magdalene, in keeping with his disguise.
[421] This line for the entrance of the Good Angel is somewhat suspect, as the stage direction where the Good Angel is first mentioned is one of the stage directions that serve as summation for events that will occur later. The Good Angel is not mentioned otherwise before he speaks, however, so based on the manuscript evidence I believe they have to be in the performance space beyond this point. His character name is not given before his first speech, and for his second he is referred to as "Bonus Angelus."
[422] Sloth has no speaking lines in the play, but is mentioned as a character that enters the performance space at 334 s.d.
[423] Gluttony has no speaking lines in the play, but is mentioned as a character that enters the performance space at 334 s.d. It is also possible, as I have explained in chapter three, that Gluttony is serving as the Taverner during the seduction scene in Jerusalem.
[424] Lechery is referred to at her first line as "Lechery," but consistently thereafter as "Luxuria."

Character Name	Line Introduced	First Speaks	Total Lines	Percentage of all lines
Sensuality	334	395	13	0.6075
The Devil[425]	358	359	96	4.486
Wrath	358	378	1	0.0467
Envy	358	379	1	0.0467
Bad Angel[426]	437	437	15	0.7009
Taverner	470	471	17	0.7944
Simon the Leper	573	573	30	1.4019
Jesus	614	619	182	8.5047
Peter	614	1036	38	1.7757
John	614	1040	10	0.4673
Disciples[427]	615	853	2	0.0935
Second Devil[428]	725	726	1	0.0467
Third Devil[429]	725	N/A	N/A	0
Weepers[430]	842	921	1	0.0467
Jew	869	869	4	0.1869
King of Marseilles	925	926	246	11.4953
Regina	925	951	73	3.4112
Miles	925	1639	6	0.2804
Second Miles[431]	925	N/A	N/A	0
Mary Jacobe	993	998	16	0.7477
Mary Salome	993	1002	22	1.028
Presbyter[432]	1143	1144	53	2.4766
Cleric	1143	1150	40	1.8692
Magdalene's Disciple[433]	1336 s.d.	N/A	N/A	0
First Angel[434]	1349	1024	42	1.9626
Second Angel	1349	1028	26	1.215
Third Angel[435]	1349	N/A	N/A	0
Shipman	1395	1396	77	3.5981

[425] The Devil is referred to either as "Dylfe," "Satan," or "Rex Diabolus."
[426] He is also referred to as "Spiritus Maligni" and "Malinus Spiritus," on the same page.
[427] Presumably this is all of the twelve apostles, although only Peter and John ever speak.
[428] We are not told whether this is Balfagour or Belzabub.
[429] We are not told whether this is Balfagour or Belzabub. There must be a third devil as the stage directions indicate that two devils come up, although this third devil has no lines.
[430] The Weepers are a group, the numbers of whom we are not given, but the Jew is likely one of them.
[431] 964 s.d. states that "þe knyghtys gete spycys and wynne," and thus there must be more than one Miles present.
[432] Due to the similarity of their performances, it is possible that the Presbyter/Cleric and Shipman/Boy duos are in fact doubled. There is nothing in the playtext to indicate this, however, and so I have left them as separate characters in this table.
[433] The disciple is referred to at 1336 s.d. and does not have any lines, nor do they appear in the performance space prior to this.
[434] The First Angel is also referred to as Raphaell when Christ commands him to go to Mary Magdalene at line 1369.
[435] The Third Angel is necessary due to the stage direction at 2019. "To angellys" descend onto the place while "other to" bring the host on the Cloud. I have made the assumption that the Good Angel is one of these two, who have no speaking lines; the Third Angel is the other.

Character Name	Line Introduced[436]	First Speaks	Total Lines	Percentage of all lines
Boy	1395	1401	25	1.1682
Priest	2039	2040	45	2.1028

Only three of the characters have more than a hundred lines: Mary Magdalene, the King of Marseilles, and Christ. Moreover, outside of those three only the King of Devils, the Queen of Marseilles, the Presbyter, and the Shipman have more than fifty lines. The vast majority of the other characters, where they do have lines, have between twenty and forty lines between them, and the average number of lines per character, even including Mary Magdalene, the King of Marseilles, and Christ, is forty-four. This average includes those characters, such as Pride and Gluttony, which should be conflated because they were called another name in the stage directions while in disguise. Allowing for these textually-based connections between characters and setting aside the notion of doubling roles—a practice which I do not believe to be occurring here due to the nature of the staging of the work (with the possible exception of the Shipman/Boy and Presbyter/Clerk pairings, as their interactions are quite similar)—the play is not unnecessarily unwieldy for actors to perform. Moreover, when the number of performers that must have been necessary to perform a typical pageant cycle is taken into account, the manpower necessary to put the play on is there, especially if the main three roles and the two comedic pairings are taken on by a group of travelling players.

[436] In the cases where there is only a single line difference, it should be understood that the character is being introduced in a stage direction. For example, Cyrus is introduced at 49 s.d. but speaks at 50.

More problematic is the staging of the work. I have spoken at length elsewhere regarding the staging, but to paraphrase what I have said there I believe the play to be performed in what I call staging complexes—groupings of geographic locations that follow the pattern of the medieval T-O map first spoken of by Isidore of Seville. Staging the work in these complexes allows for the play to be performed with fewer resources devoted to the construction of scaffolding, as locations would be able to share supports where necessary. A list of the complexes and the diagram of my proposed staging are below:

I. Bethany Complex
- A. Arbor
- B. Lazarus' Tomb
- C. Magdalene Castle
- D. Simon the Leper's Home

II. Hell
- E. King of Flesh's location
- F. King of the World's location
- G. Hellmouth
- H. House set Aflame
- I. Stage above Hell

III. Jerusalem/Heaven
- J. The Cloud[437]
- K. The Cross
- L. Heaven
- M. Herod's Palace
- N. Pilate's Palace
- O. The Sepulchre
- P. The Stations[438]
- Q. The Tavern

IV. Marseilles
- R. The Heathen Temple
- S. The Lodge

[437] The line on the diagram is meant to represent the path of travel for the Cloud between Heaven and the Heathen Temple. Mary Magdalene will be lifted into the clouds somewhere along this path.
[438] The line on the diagram is meant the represent a possible path of travel for the three Marys. The actual stations are defined by their performance, rather than by set dressing.

T. The Palace of the King of Marseilles

V. Rome

V. Tiberius' Palace

VI. Wilderness

U. The Priest's Cell.

Unaffiliated

W. Bedlem

X. Galelye

Y. The Mountain

Z. The Ship

VII. The Place

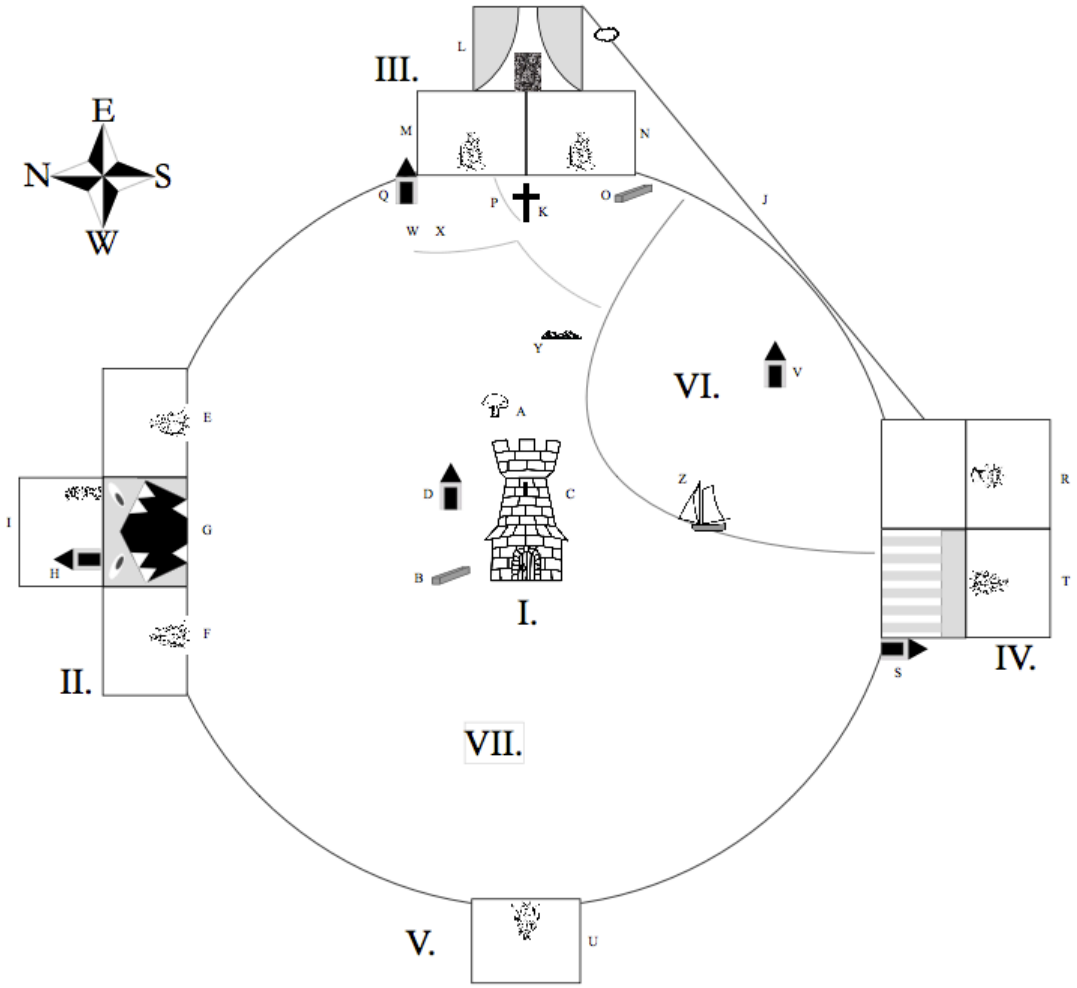

Figure A.1: A possible staging of the Digby Mary Magdalene with the locations grouped into complexes. Where a location is partially defined by movement, a line has been used.

This arrangement yields four complexes at the cardinal points—Jerusalem/Heaven, Hell, Rome, and Marseilles. Bethany, centered on Magdalene Castle, is at the center of the playing space. It also leaves several unaffiliated performance areas, which would be in different locations throughout the place. The Wilderness is between Marseilles and the Jerusalem/Heaven complex, the Mountain is between Marseilles and Jerusalem along the Ship's travel route, the Ship itself is a mobile stage, and Bedlem and Galelye only have to be defined through performance during the King of Marseilles' pilgrimage.